

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 157

Cal Poly

Sept. 2006

### ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

Where does one even begin to thank everyone for all the August activities? With two work weekends, a week of summer camp, official events and a run with a BBQ, much was accomplished in the way of work projects being started and completed, delighting in gourmet meals, gathering 'round the fire, sharing of lots of stories or wild tales and just having fun. Don't worry—if you were not able to participate this year we will have another one scheduled for next year so be happy.

Activities began on Thurs. Aug. 10 when we hauled the new tractor and PTO driven chipper up to Swanton for its debut. As soon as it was unloaded I found brush along the road to test it out and was very impressed with the chippers performance to make chopped lumber. Friday morning Pete, Amy, Scott, Edski, Geoff and Rick joined in on the fun with us. Our first order of business was to finish the fence by installing gates. A double gate was installed for ease of access & egress, along with a single gate near the water tower for the crew to use. The new chipper was then tried out along the right-of-way, where much of the debris was cleaned up and out going to San Vicente Junction. Scott painted sign posts, and the huge project of cleaning and resurfacing all the picnic tables was started until the pressure washer burned up! On Sat., the work force was augmented by Bill McNab, Martha, Marty, Carol, Estelle, Mark Cooper, Clinton, Dick Toulson, Fitz, Stan, Andy, and Randy. The garden crew worked on the gardens, McNab and crew watered the trees, the

chippers chipped, and the wooden columns in the station were replaced with concrete on the bottom portions of them. On Sun. we were honored to have Bob join us, in between his other camping obligations, to help out. A new project, a tractor/storage shed, for the train field was started. Clinton took and passed the conductor/brakeman exam—congrats! He also recently passed his driver's license exam so look out. A fireman training class was also conducted to give more experience to Edski and Pete with a run prior to and after dinner.

On Mon. Swanton's official summer camp began with Fitz, Marty, Pete, Estelle, Edski, Andy, Carol, Geoff, McNab, Clinton, Cooper, Aaron, Logan, Rick M, Stan, Mary Ann and myself. Activities consisted of meeting with the ranch personnel, the Land Trust committee, and then continuing with all those projects started on the weekend or weekends in the past. This was to be a week of getting things done, preparing for upcoming runs, and having fun doing it all. Volunteers came and went according to what their schedules allowed, guests stopped in and some even helped out with projects, or joined us in the dinners by cooking, cleaning, whatever. All in all we had 25 volunteers participate.

Some of the projects completed were: pressure washing, sanding and sealing all the picnic tables and benches—[thanks to a new pressure washer purchased]; construction of a storage shed in the train field; bronze bushings for the locomotives were made; the septic tank was pumped out for the first time ever, we think; a loading ramp and running boards were built to allow the tractor to be loaded and hauled on a flat-car; signal and switch lights were installed: new vinyl fence posts in and

around the station were filled with concrete to provide greater stability; the station was power washed; the CL & E saw some progress in painting and electrical wiring; gardens were tended, trees were watered; and by putting the chipper and tractor on the flatcar we were able to chip brush along the entire right-of-way. Like all good things that must come to an end so did our Swanton Camp on Sun., Aug. 20. We left, but Pete, Geoff, Fitz and Andy were still enjoying and having too much fun.

Thursday, Aug. 24 we returned for the upcoming weekend of a potluck, BBQ and run for the BAGRS. Bob W greeted us, where we then off-loaded 60 sq. ft. of pavers, two tanks of acetylene and oxygen, and the windows for the tractor storage shed. Friday morning the Oregonian Johnsons arrived to join others—Pete, Edski, McNab, Geoff, Martha, Andy, Marty, along with new member John Gallagher and his friend Clarence. John, Clarence, Pete and I took plywood, wood, and windows down to the train field to install the walls of the new tractor storage shed. A last coat of sealer was applied to the picnic tables, while others were helping get things ready for the upcoming weekend event. On Sat. volunteers, Randy, Chris, Lou, Rick M., Stan, Fitz, Dick and MacGaddis and wife joined us. A tractor and disc were hauled down to the train field on the flat car; the shed was finished and painted; and most of the tractor field was disked. Plans are now being made to cultivate the tractor field for a year to remove weeds and by next summer be able to plant pumpkins to provide weekend runs to harvest them for Halloween and Thanksgiving. Sunday the annual BAGRS Day Run was hosted to over 100 visitors. A good time was had by all and an “’Atta Boy, for a job well done, goes to Bob” for sure. I also want to thank every one of you that came to Swanton to help in some way for either the weekends or for the summer camp. Your contribution is what helps make this place so special to all who visit, and to all of us that enjoy it on a regular basis. We look forward to your continued support and to hopefully seeing you, your family, and friends at some of our upcoming events.

NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTERS are:

Brian Allen	San Jose
John Gallagher	Santa Cruz

*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.*

### **Down Behind the Railway**

With your President, air monkey, & car-barnist.

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

RGBFitz@aol.com 650.737.9584

#### My Fellow Swantoons:

As you all are aware September hasn't been the seventh month for about nineteen centuries, so let's look at something more recent, say 1882 and the beginnings of our celebration of labor's endeavors.

According to the U.S. Dept. of Labor, "Some records show that Peter J. McGuire, general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a cofounder of the American Federation of Labor, was first in suggesting a day to honor those "who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold"".

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883.

Following the declarations of several states twelve years after the first celebration, congress created the holiday, as follows:

June 28, 1894

An Act Making Labor Day a legal holiday.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the first Monday of September in each year, being the day celebrated and known as Labor's Holiday, is hereby made a legal public holiday, to all intents and purposes, in the same manner as Christmas, the first day of January, the twenty-second day of February, the thirtieth day of May, and the fourth day of July are*

now made by law public holidays.

APPROVED, June 28, 1894

"Labor Day differs in every essential way from the other holidays of the year in any country," said Samuel Gompers, founder and longtime president of the American Federation of Labor. "All other holidays are in a more or less degree connected with conflicts and battles of man's prowess over man, of strife and discord for greed and power, of glories achieved by one nation over another. Labor Day...is devoted to no man, living or dead, to no sect, race, or nation."

And down behind the railway we had our own days of labor with the Swanton Summer Camp cleaning up many small projects preparatory to BAGRS, Land-Trust, and Cal Poly run days. Additionally there was a course in firing a steam locomotive. Can you tell me if 'hostlering' is a real word? As in to work as a hostler. Well, what ever it is called Marty taught it, all part of being a fireman.

The plentiful supply of scrap aluminum was partially reduced to ingots and one sorely used journal box was repaired and filled.

We're in the 'run season' folks. BAGRS had their run and display days the weekend of Aug. 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. We have our next workday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> to get ready for Land Trust of Santa Cruz County's 21<sup>st</sup> annual picnic on Sun. Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> followed by CalPoly Day, Sun. Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>.

Busy times, but fulfilling. The Land Trust requires little more than train crew and docents, while CalPoly day needs more folks to assist in setting up, parking, and the usual after event cleanup...

The Society is you, not the equipment, so bring your willing hands and skills.

Following the run days we have a General Meeting of the membership on Sat., Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>, noonish (That's Swanton time.) with a special order of business to nominate candidates for the offices of President, Second Vice President, Fourth Vice President, and Secretary. More on this next month.

**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.



Dahlia Garden



A wide load, New tractor on flat car



Chipper at work



BAGER Short Line

## UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

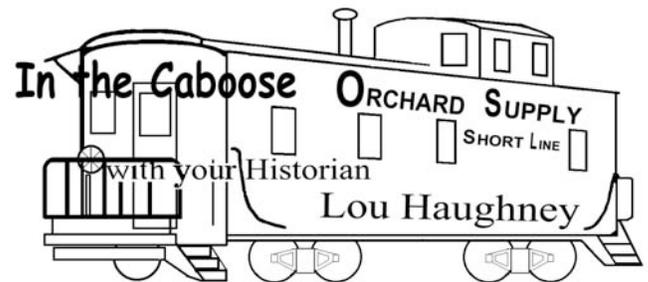
Sept. 09-10 work weekend  
 Sept. 23 prepare for Land Trust  
 Sept. 24 Land Trust Run  
 Sept. 30 prepare for Cal Poly Day  
 Oct. 01 CAL POLY DAY RUN  
 Oct. 14-15 work weekend

Whew! What an eventful month of activities and there are still more to come, but bring it all on—we're ready. A huge thanks to all that helped out in so so many ways. Completing projects, starting some new ones, cleaning up, etc. and then especially for providing such great, nutritious meals to give us vast amounts of energy to continue on with these tasks daily during summer camp. Like always, no one left a dinner table hungry, and the gourmet delights were quite vast for all to partake in beginning with appetizers and ending with desserts on a nightly basis. Thank goodness summer camp provided enough physical activity to work all those enjoyed calories off. At September's first work weekend Ed & I will go north to Alaska. However, the second work weekend, we'll be back, getting last minute things ready for the Land Trust Run on Sun.. For this event, they do the BBQ, etc., we just host, run the trains, sell our merchandise and enjoy the day's event. Usually over 500 attend. Then the following weekend we will be hosting our final big BBQ of the year with our annual Cal Poly Day. Invites were mailed, or emailed out to over 1200 and replies will be coming in very soon. Your invitation is included in this newsletter—you are encouraged to duplicate and share with your in-laws/out-laws, friends, etc., but we also ask that you RSVP for sure so that we can have a better head count and know who will or won't be attending, as well as for assigning tasks. We will be asking all to help out in some way on Sun., Oct. 1 to help make the day successful and enjoyable for all. As always, we will need food servers, cookers, parking assistants, train crew, hosts, tour guides, and **EVERYONE** to help in some way with clean up so that all will be able to get home in a timely manner, and to button down the hatches for the season. Remember, too, to start thinking of the elections coming up, a theme for New Year's, and that come Oct. we return to one work weekend a month—only on the second Sat. and the Sun. following that Sat..

Look forward to seeing all of you when we get back, and sharing our experience of riding the Yukon Rails.

PLEASE: **anyone wanting to stay overnight for work weekends, 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.*



Robert C. Maxfield and the MacDermot 1913 locomotive

Robert C. Maxfield, who owned and operated the Overfair 1913 locomotive in the 1970's as the Calistoga Steam Railroad, died in Calistoga on May 19, 2006. He was the last survivor of a group of railroading enthusiasts who owned and preserved MacDermot's Overfair Locomotives; those others were Billy Jones, Quentin Jervis et al., and Al Smith.

Maxfield played an important role in fulfilling MacDermot's hopes of putting the 1913 back into operation. It started with Bob's reading an article in the January 5, 1969 issue of the *Oakland Tribune*. Harre Demoro, the newspaper's transportation reporter, wrote about the pending sale of MacDermot's 1912 and 1913 locomotives by the Billy Jones estate. Although he was a real estate appraisal by profession, but a railroading buff by avocation, Bob promptly bought the two locomotives and three passenger cars with strong hopes that he would one day be operating equipment of the Overfair Railway once more. Finding a suitable location for the railway took a few years until he bought 53.5 acres of land near the Calistoga Glider Airport in Napa County. Then, Erich Thomsen of the Redwood Valley RR Shop in Oakland inspected and performed any needed

maintenance on the 1913 locomotive. The 1912 engine was not put into service. (Thomsen was the builder and operator of the 15-inch gauge Redwood Valley Railway in the Tilden Park area of the Berkeley/Oakland hills.)



Overfair locomotive 1913 undergoing inspection and refurbishment at shops of the Redwood Valley RR.

Left, Robert C. Maxfield, owner; right, Steven Rives of the RVRR.

Photo by Russ Reed of the *Oakland Tribune*, in the 6/2/1974 edition.

With MacDermot's refurbished 1913 locomotive and three of the Overfair passenger cars, Maxfield operated his Calistoga Steam Railroad from Oct. 4, 1975 to Aug. 9, 1979; daily except Mondays in the summer, and on weekends in the winter. Economic conditions in the late 1970's were not good, and tourist travel to Napa Valley had declined. Meanwhile, Al Smith had kept aware of what Bob was doing with the MacDermot equipment. Al knew of the Overfair equipment through his association with Billy Jones when the latter had all of MacDermot's Overfair engines. In Aug. 1979, the Calistoga Steam Railroad made its last run. Bob sold all the equipment to Al; both the 1912 and the 1913 locomotives, the passenger cars, the tracks, the turntable, the plans for a roundhouse, and related support and maintenance material. Al immediately transported all that equipment to his Swanton Pacific Ranch to rebuild the railway as the Swanton Pacific Railroad.

The *Oakland Tribune's* Harre Demoro faithfully and prominently chronicled the stages in Maxfield's revival of the Overfair Railway. His account of the locomotives' arrival in Oakland, where they had been built by MacDermot, is reprinted below.

"OVERFAIR RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE IS BACK HOME IN OAKLAND one-third size engines have been purchased by Piedmont train buff by Harre W. Demoro, Tribune Staff Writer

The Overfair Railway of L. M. MacDermot's dreams may run again.

Two of the miniature steam locomotives the late Mr. MacDermot designed and 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 and run again.

Maxfield bought the locomotives and an assortment of other equipment after he read a Tribune story about the equipment being for sale.

MacDermot died in 1948, and 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 [1914 and 1915] and the Switcher to a group [Jervis, Shaw, and ???] in southern California.

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

The equipment is in excellent condition and 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."

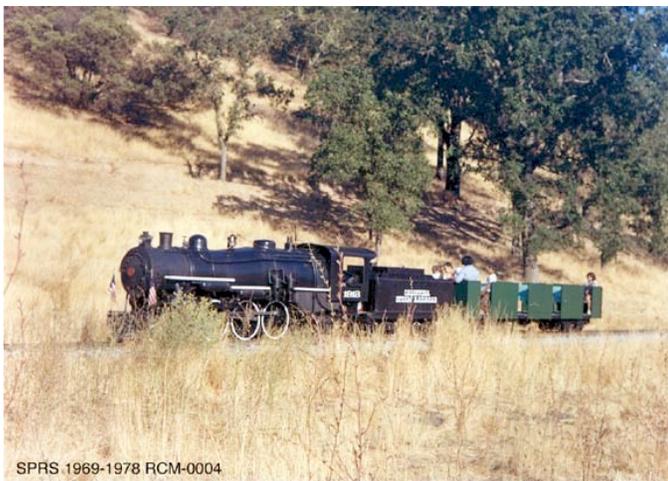
From *The Oakland Tribune*, Nov. 9, 1969; reprinted in *The Western Railroader*, Dec. 1969, vol. 32, No. 12.

Yes, Bob Maxfield was a dreamer, but he was able to fulfill that dream by operating with his family the Calistoga Steam Railroad. After its sale, he continued to dream of railroading opportunities right up to the present. He was planning and working towards more restoration of railroading in Napa County.

We at the Swanton Pacific Railroad were privileged to have Bob visit us occasionally on our special run days in recent years. Then, he would once again put his hand to the throttle of 1913 and take the train down the track.



Preparing the Calistoga Steam Railroad train for a day's run  
Napa County, California, 1975-1979  
Photo by Warren K. Miller



Calistoga Steam Railroad, 1975-1979  
Locomotive No. 1913 at base of "Mount Washington"  
Photo by Warren K. Miller

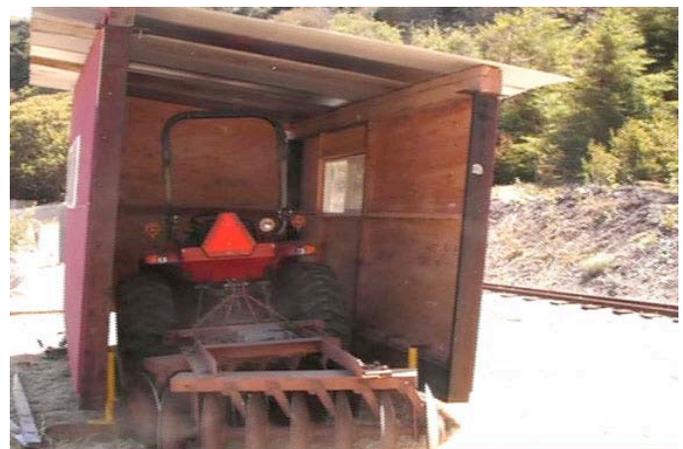
**More SPRR Photos**



Visitors planting trees



The Calistoga Steam Railroad Station, Napa County, California  
1975-1979  
Photo by Warren K. Miller



Tractor shed with tractor