ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

Even though this seems late—Happy New Year to all! I’m looking forward to a productive year, as we have so many opportunities to fulfill our goals in moving forward with the University and our community. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all that participated in the New Year’s eve festivities, and in particular to Ken McCrary’s traditional hot mulled cider, and to Ken Fischer and crew, for the fantastic bonfire. The weather was great—dry and not too cold. Approximately 200 plus visitors participated, including guests from Russia with Cossack hats, fun filled spirits—but not of vodka variety. Since alcohol is not permitted, this has become a true family event, starting with a train ride, potluck, bonfire and then more train rides. I would also like to thank all of our volunteers that participated in helping to make this event so successful.

For us, the first work weekend of the year started early. On Wed., Jan. 10, we came up to attend a Santa Cruz Planning Commission Hearing along with the ranch staff. The meeting was for the re-zoning of the parcel, including the railroad site, for timber production zoning. The next step will be for approval from the Board of Supervisors. Right now we have no idea when this meeting might be, so for those of you living within the area—keep your eyes and ears open for any word of such. Notice is usually given in the local paper under legal notices. Public participation can be critical on such issues, so it would be highly recommended that you would be available to participate.

Upon arriving at Swanton, we were greeted by Randy, who assisted us in unloading the supplies brought up from SLO for SPRR. With daylight still available, I decided to take the tractor down to the Christmas tree field to do some disking. Upon leaving the car barn, the tractor’s roll-bar snagged the roll-up door. It was basically fixed to work, but remains somewhat crumpled. Thursday, Jan. 11, greeted us with frost, and temperatures in the mid-20’s, an extreme change for us coming from warm Cayucos. However, bundling up, I finished the disking in the Christmas field.

Currently, things are coming together on the Christmas tree-field. We have a forestry student, Colin Noyes, who will be working with us as an intern during the spring quarter. An Ag. Systems Mgmt. Class will also be conducting a study and design of the irrigation and equipment requirements. This activity will provide a productive link between the railroad and the educational goals of the University. I feel this will be a significant win-win for all of those involved. On Friday, Pete showed up early, and eager to get started on our existing projects. Even though rain was predicted, it was sunny, clear and chilly. Before noon, Bob arrived and we all enjoyed a slight heat wave while eating lunch outside. We later borrowed a box scraper from the ranch that fits our new tractor, to work on the siding of the train field. Meanwhile other volunteers slowly began drifting in for the upcoming work weekend.
Cold frost and very low temperatures greeted everyone on Saturday morning, making for a slower start for a huge turnout of volunteers (approx 24). Marty and crew worked on the locomotives. Lou, Chris and Margaret worked on organizing the vast amounts of historical information. Martha, Amy and Mary Ann took down all the remaining New Year’s decorations. Pete, Scott, Kyle, Bob and I went to the train field to work on the spur. Later in the afternoon, many went up to the Big Creek Sawmill to join in the festive celebration of Bud McCrary’s 80th birthday. It was quite an event, and an honor to share with such a wonderful, caring and giving neighbor. SPRR certainly wishes Bud many more such celebrations.

Sunday, after a very productive Saturday, some remained to continue the battle with the cold weather. Work continued on the train’s spur, others stayed up in the buildings trying to stay warm and hoping temps would get above the 20’s.

The New Year seems to have started out on a VERY positive note, and I will continue to look forward to a highly productive and enjoyable year.

**Down Behind the Railway**

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

Reynold ‘Fitz’ FitzPatrick
RGBFitz@aol.com 650.737.9584

My Fellow Swantoons:

Did you know that the first U.S. patent for a steamboat was issued to Isaac Briggs and William Longstreet on February 1st, 1788 by the State of Georgia? The same year that Cyrus Griffin was elected the President of the United States in Congress Assembled, which is not the same as President of the United States of America. (Lou has all the fun with current history, the past hundred years or so, so I have to dig a little deeper.)

Around 1785, a handful of American inventors tried to build steamboats. It is interesting to note some of the given names; Jehosaphat Starr, Apollos Kinsley, Isaac Briggs, William Longstreet, Elijah Ormsbee, and Nathan Read, and how they would be received now with made up names and InNerCapS.

England prohibited the export of engines at the time and so, by necessity, they had to build their own, usually without adequate facilities. It is fame and success did not necessarily crown their endeavors.

Of particular interest to me was the quotation of Oliver Evans; “If steam could be made to drive a boat on the water, why not a wagon on the land?”

I have long noted that when our Creator makes an engineer they should, by all rights, have loving siblings who are lawyers and accountants. I may amend that to include a chronicler.

Of course that last comment could only bring me to the need the Society has for clerk – record-keeping type of person. We do a wonderful job of building and repairing, but are not quite so good at keeping records or documenting the modifications we have made. If you are a member whose physical condition precludes you from gandy-dancing, perhaps you would be interested in joining that happy band of folk that show up on workdays and keep track of what we are doing? As an included benefit, as a result of your duties, you will know everything that is going on. Knowledge is Power!

Planned projects for the next workday are:

Randy and Marty will be working on the 1914’s back head.

Weather permitting;

Pete would like to set up the billboard.

We need to connect the raw water system to the water treatment equipment – as yet an unassigned job.

Should the weather be inclement, there is always general housekeeping and reducing scrap aluminum to ingots.

EdSki is working on the Keystone car decking and Rick is cleaning and painting the car’s trucks. They could use some help.

Much like last workday.

That’s all folks.

**UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY**

Mary Ann Carnegie

Feb. 10-11 work weekend
Mar. 10-11 work weekend
April 14 prepare for Al Smith Day run
April 15 **AL SMITH DAY RUN**

Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day and then alas—Al Smith Day. Time just flies by with all the fun we’re having. Before long it will be two work weekends a month as well. Remember that begins
in May and usually runs through September as we embark on the busy time of the year. So those of you with grand ideas on how to celebrate all these events, just step right on up to the plate and offer all your suggestions to be tried out. With rains staying back thus far we are hoping that we will be able to get many tasks performed in Feb. and March for getting things “squared and in order” for the opening of our train ride season on Sunday, April 15—everyone should have their taxes done and be ready to get out and celebrate. Be thinking of all the people you have told or shared Swanton with and be sure we have their addresses to send an invite to. We will be getting invitations printed up soon and out in the mail. We shall look forward to sharing the good times together at Swanton and remember to let us know when and if you, friends or other guests are coming as good planning always makes things happen much easier.

SideCar

Notes/Comments from our Volunteers

Cal Barn Landscaping:

With the Cal-Barn renovation completed the building needs landscaping. Our volunteer railroad group took on the Cal-Barn renovation through to completion and now needs to get back to the railroad projects.

The landscaping is important as the Cal-Barn is viewed as you turn off Swanton Rd. into the ranch, railroad, and BBQ/train station area. As a thought, does the Horticulture Dept. have a class or club hat could take on this project? Does someone, or anyone, know the Horticulture Dept. well enough to ask them? It is not a big project, but an important one.

Swanton Garden Area 06-07:

The large planting beds constructed at the station by Rich Mehr, and watered mainly by Andy McLean, produced an impressive flowering Dahlia display last summer. This year we need to tend to the whole rest of the garden area. Among other things needed, a reliable garden irrigation system is a prime wish. It now takes a full long day to water, by hand, the different garden areas. Of course, we have the gophers, deer, weeds, etc to contend with on a continuing basis. So, if someone can step forward to help design and setup a garden watering system, you will be welcomed to do so. Assistants of all kinds will also be greatly appreciated. Many hands make the work lighter and faster.

[Editor’s note: each of these were written and presented by volunteer Bill McNab, and though he gave himself no credit for the Dahlia display—we do owe much to him for taking the time to plant and nurture these bulbs that everyone was able to enjoy.]

We would also encourage many more of our volunteers to submit articles to be printed in the Side Car Column for all to read about and become aware of issues, concerns, etc.
Many of you have come to know Pete McFall as a very devoted volunteer that will just about take on any project for SPRR very willingly. However, he really stands out and shines when it comes to coming up with themes for our New Year’s Eve celebrations—from a mirrored disco ball to all the other lights. Last year—we had the Polar Express, this year, Electrical Illumination; and, yes, he already has plans for this year, but we’re not revealing it just quite yet. So—for this man of many talents and ideas we asked him how he came up with the idea and just how did he get involved with SPRR. [We have included a great photo of him, in case some of you may not recognize or know him.] This is what Pete had to say—Theme for this year was found by doing a search for Overfair on the internet- came across an article on the displays, they made a comment that people were coming out at night to see the buildings all lit up with this new fangled thing called electricity. There were large projectors around the grounds that projected colored lights up in the sky. They even had a Southern Pacific steam engine that ran on rollers, much like a dymotor, to create steam in the air so as to see the lights.

About getting involved at SPRR—Had been to several picnics that GGRM had in the mid 90's - had a chance to talk with several of the members of Swanton. On doctors orders to find something to combat the stress form work I decided to find out about joining. A letter arrived from the then secretary Fitz inviting me to join, showed up on a Sunday and as they say the rest is history.

As a kid I was tinkering with old radios and such. During my high school days worked for a TV shop in San Mateo. In those days things were able to be repaired and serviced with a tube checker and a volt meter. The circuits made sense. Went on to take radar school in the Navy and again the equipment was serviced much the same way. Today's electronics are made to be replaced, not fixed. The idea of being able to take a project and bring it to viable product or operation is the fun of doing things at Swanton. Railroads have always interested me, growing up in San Mateo was interesting going down to the train station at third street to catch a train to San Francisco to do our weekly shopping. Steam was still king on the commute line. This was the only way I saw local steam as a kid, mom would not let me cross at the light a Third and Bayshore by myself. By time I was able to cross Bayshore with my bike, steam was gone. We always had to take the lower level of the Bay Bridge so I could see the Key System or freight motors crossing the bridge. At the end of steam there were now stores in downtown San Mateo. Getting to see a cab forward up close with three or four commute coaches behind it. The sad part was going to San Francisco and seeing the two middle tracks of Bayshore Yard with all the steam engines lined up like elephants getting ready for the scrappers. Dad knew some of the roundhouse people through his job and always pointed to a freshly shopped engine parked in the weeds next to the old hiway; this engine was the pet of the roundhouse foreman. Sadly this past new years eve that engine passed by that spot for the last time on its way to Niles Canyon.

PLEASE: anyone staying overnight for work weekends, call or e-mail reservations in ASAP. Facilities are limited & we want to make sure we can accommodate all. Call (805) 995-3659 or e-mail ecarnegi@calpoly.edu. This helps in successfully planning our Sat. night dinner.

THE OVERFAIR RAILWAY'S TRESTLE OVER THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY SHORELINE

For the most part of its 2+ mile extent, the Overfair Railway's double tracks ran along the shoreline of the San Francisco Bay at the northern side of the Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE). Why did the tracks have to make a diversion out into the waterfront at one area?

The pictures of the trestle that accompany this article show a large, long building alongside the waterfront, the California State Building. That building, which contained exhibits from the 58
California Counties, was about 640 feet long (two football fields). Beside it on the waterfront was the North Promenade for pedestrians. About 2/3's of the way towards the western end, the Promenade expanded farther outward into the North Plaza, which continued on past the California Bldg.. The combined length of the North Promenade and Plaza was probably close to 900 feet. Since those structures were right at the shoreline, they forced the Overfair Railway to build a trestle to carry its tracks over the shifting waters breaking on the shore. Then, to go around the increased outward extent of the North Plaza, the trestle and tracks had to detour farther out from the shoreline. The resulting trestle, with its double tracks, was constructed of heavy timbers, as the pictures show. Note the absence of guard-rails and the location of a walkway in the center between the two tracks.


"...the short trestle over a minor arm of the San Francisco Bay. MacDermot wanted to build this trestle to the scale of the trains. [1/3 scale]. But the arbitrary decision was handed down [by the Exposition management] that the trestle must be built, as an extra margin of safety, with the same size timbers required for a standard gauge railroad! The bridge cost twice as much as the original estimate."

Overfair Railway trestle curving out to pass along the North Plaza. View is from the northeast side of the California State Bldg. to the west with the Golden Gate channel in the right background.

,*Photo is from the Al Smith Collection.*

Well, what with the winter storms in February, March, November, and December that churn up the Bay's waters and with the normal daily tidal range of up to 8 feet, a full size trestle would be preferred. I wonder whether or not the trains ran on a day with high winds? Even now the Golden Gate Bridge alerts motorists on days of high winds.

Overfair Railway tracks on a trestle at the PPIE along the northeast side of the California State Bldg. on the right. Background from left to right: two US Navy battleships and the beacon tower at the Yacht Harbor.

*Notes: Another picture from the accompanying set was published in the last issue of the newsletter (Jan. 2007).*
Don Larson, originator of the World Fairs Collection at CSU Fresno Library, helped in the identification of the California Bldg..

The dimensional information about the California Bldg. and about the location of the North Promenade and Plaza are taken from a large scale map of the PPIE grounds, a map that shows the fire protection facilities available at the Exposition; such as, high pressure water mains, hydrants, etc. That map also shows all the standard gauge tracks used during the construction phase; unfortunately, it does not show the Overfair Railway trackage. This map was found a few years ago by Bob Parkinson, our Berkeley researcher and contributor.

Another view of the trestle, part of this set of views, was published in last month’s newsletter, Jan. 2007.