

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 167

Cal Poly

Aug. 2007

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

Whew! July has come and gone and our activity level has increased, but with all the support from our volunteers [over 20 arriving on Sat. July 21] much progress was made. Our “young” volunteers got the truck crane running, and are now on the lookout for a new fuel tank. Car-barn crew spent an enormous amount of time, cleaning, arranging and adding an entire new air system to accommodate the blast cabinet. Track crew, took the tractor with the chipper to remove and chip accumulated months worth of brush above, around, and over the track. With weather being so warm and dry, many of our volunteers elected to campout in and around College Park. Four-Dutch oven cookers completed the camping out atmosphere by providing gourmet delights. McNab provided Swiss steak, Pete, a delicious stew, both dishes accompanied by Mary Ann’s cornbread, followed by Kyle’s sizzling, completely emptied, finger licking good peach cobbler. Martha and Amy brought other excellent side dishes. Sunday morning was taken up with a Board Mtg. held in the Cal Barn. Review of progress and future plans were discussed, and an election committee will be appointed. In the afternoon the Davis Trencher was put to work to install a water line at Redwood Circle. At your next visit to Swanton you may wish to disembark at the Cosgrove Station to view the new plantings there. You will be picked up upon the return train trip.

The second work weekend in July centered around the Golden Spikes event. This event served two functions—a continued commitment initiated by Al Smith for an organization he was involved in, and as a training opportunity for our train crews. On Sunday volunteers moved the blast cabinet from the machine shop to the car-barn. Track crew hauled sand, gravel and cement north of the bridge and poured a foundation for a future signal light, where its base was put in place later that afternoon. And as usual—all work weekends

are topped off with scrumptious meals, enjoyed by all, but followed by our home scales directing us to diet for the next week or two! The weight gain is worth it all in that it is such a pleasure to work with a group of dedicated volunteers, and their wonderful attitude in helping to preserve and operate Al Smith’s dream.

Down Behind the Railway

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

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My Fellow Swantoons:

Every July I read, or reread, some article or book written about, or during, our revolutionary war. This year it was Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense” and his “Crisis” letters.

For a moment in time Paine held celebrity status when his “Crisis” was published as a pamphlet; ushistory.org noted, “This pamphlet was so popular that as a percentage of the population, it was read by or read to more people than today watch the Super Bowl.”

May I share with you a paragraph from the beginning of “Common Sense”?

“SOME writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness POSITIVELY by uniting our affections, the latter NEGATIVELY by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher.”

I could not help but observe his use of ‘society’ as ‘...promoting our happiness positively by uniting our affections...’.

Could there be a better definition of our society?

Aside from the training on trains that will be going on during our summer camp we have a few little projects that have been hanging fire for the past few years.

Geoff and Bruce are cleaning up the machine shop which included moving the blast cabinet back to the Car Shop with the grinder soon to follow, all of which will decrease the grit near the machine tools. (Grit is the stuff one finds at the bottom of a bird cage.). This requires rearranging the furniture in the car shop and shortening the table space near the Marvel saw.

Fritz and Mark, and a surplus of supervisors, cleared off the rack at the west end of the shop and we discovered some amazing things stuck back behind twenty years of storage. The rack was relocated to the south wall and the cabinet was moved from the machine shop to the car shop last work day. There are boxes, bins, and buckets of oddness that need to be sorted out – anyone have a sorting hat?

If the County issues a permit for repairing the roof over the railcars we will undertake rebuilding the ‘car shed’ roof and bringing the foundation and walls up to current seismic standards.

As you may have noticed, Pete is installing signal lights at various locations, the latest of which is a signal north of the Carnegie Bridge. The signal base is in place, however he needs about four hundred feet of trench to hold low voltage conduit. The good news is we have a trencher on loan; we just need an operator or two. It could be you.

We would also like to move the rail next to the Santa Fe caboose to the rail yard at San Vicente, more opportunity for conductor and rail crane training.

And there is the replacement of the grills in the BBQ pit, an interesting project.

Marty and Randy will be working on the locomotives and will be willing to teach you the care and maintenance of a steam loco.

There are lots of possibilities for accomplishment, education, tutoring, story telling, and fun. There is no requirement you spend the entire week with us, come when you can.

Hope to see you there.

Fitz

NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTERS are:

John Davison

Rapid City, SD

On behalf of the entire organization, we welcome 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.



Placing signal base on concrete pad

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

August 11/12	work weekend
August 13-19	Swanton's Fitness Club—aka workweek
August 25/26	BAGR's annual outing
Sept. 09/09	work weekend
Sept. 22/23	work weekend
Sept. 30	Land Trust Run



Trenching into Redwood Circle

BAGRS DAY AT SWANTON PACIFIC Aug 26, 2007

By Bob Wilkinson

Enjoy a full day of unlimited train rides, a great barbecue lunch, tours and just relaxing on the lawn watching the BAGRS Short-line and Live Steam modules. The official hours are from 10:30AM to 4 PM. However, if you would like to see the Pacifics getting fired up plan to arrive by 9 AM. The cost this year will be: \$15 for 18

and over, \$8 under 18 and little kids free. Checks or cash may be paid to Bob Wilkinson at the gate. I will be buying food that weekend before so please RSVP by August 18. Swanton volunteers helping that day will only have to pay \$8. Hope to see you all there. We will have our usual cook'em yourself rib eye steak feed on Friday (\$7) and potluck on Saturday. Would like a rough head count if possible on the Swanton folks, thanks Bob Wilkinson (650)343-8150 wilkie@pacbell.net Please put BAGRS in the subject line so it won't get mixed with !spam.

Now that most of my blurb is taken care of by others—thank you very much—just want to remind folks of the upcoming week of working out at Swanton—Aug. 13-19. There will be much to do about a lot, for a lot of you, so come on over and take part in all the fun. We also have planned for the evenings some great meals, planet gazing through a powerful telescope. Rumor has it that planet Mars will be the brightest in Aug. and won't be this way again until 2287—most, I don't think will have an opportunity to ever see it again. We have now entered into our busiest time of the year. Sept. will be followed with the two work weekends, Land Trust, followed with Cal Poly Day, and Oct.'s first work weekend. We will be paddling like heck under water in order that all runs smooth above. Start to think of guests you would like to have come to Cal Poly Day on Oct. 7 as we will be getting the invitations out mid or end of Aug. New Year's too is less than 5 months away and we think we have a theme, but will discuss more at the work week. Stay tuned as we know the excitement is getting to you to be in the know!!

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.



Crew training

SIDE TRACK

By *Lou Haughney*

COOKING a DUTCH OVEN POT ROAST in a CABOOSE

Dutch oven dinners after a Saturday workday have become a tradition for Swanton Pacific Railroad volunteers. The recent Dutch oven cook offs have revealed culinary talents normally unsuspected in our volunteers. Cooking skills, however, were prized assets in a particular class of railroad workers in “The Golden Age of Railroads”, specifically the caboose crews. Most cabooses had stoves used both for heating and for cooking the crew’s meals during long hauls.

The book, *the Railroad Caboose*, includes a long chapter entitled “Caboose Cookery”, in which a character “Haywire Mac” (Harry K. McClintock), a brakeman, switchman, and minstrel, presents the following recipe.

“An old-fashioned Dutch oven lets you turn out pot-roasts for a king. Just get it hot, use plenty of grease, and sear your meat well, turning it often. After that add a couple quarts of water, two or three onions, a carrot and, if you like, a bit of garlic. Then clap the lid on and let ‘er simmer slowly for about two hours. Put more water in from time to time if needed. About 20 minutes before meal time add your peeled spuds---and before sitting down to eat invite the worthy brother who is riding with you.”

“Haywire Mac” has this advise for caboose cookery.

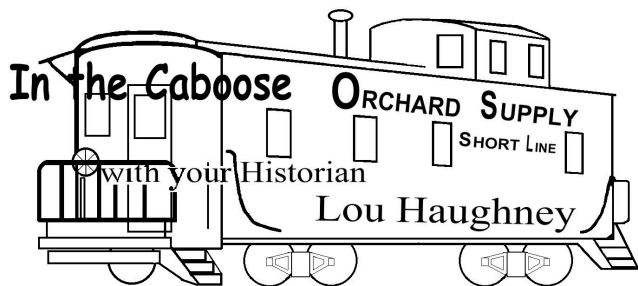
“The first requirement is a kettle---not a tall narrow pot but a low squatty one that won't upset easily when the hogger makes a rough stop. A tight flanged lid will keep it from falling off. I used to pick up a light piece of chain and fasten it to the roof directly above the stove. If the yard crew should take a notion to switch your caboose track while dinner is cooking, your Mulligan will remain right side up. When buying a skillet for the caboose, get a cast-iron or heavy steel kind. The lightweight variety will scorch your chow before it is heated through.”

The engineers' handling of the trains sometimes affected disastrously the preparation and the serving of the meals and contributed immensely to the friendliness or the hostility between the front and the back ends of the train.

Reference: Knapke, William F. and Freeman Hubbard, *The Railroad Caboose / Its 100 Year History, Legend, and Lore*. Golden West Books, 1968, pages 55, 63.

*Golden Spikes—THANK YOU VERY MUCH
Martha Neilsen!*

Almost all who attended the Golden Spikes Run the last weekend in July expressed nothing but positive comments for the event. Though a small crowd came, it was a fun filled day—great weather, good food, lots of visiting and an opportunity for more training for all the SPRR trainees. I especially would like to thank all the volunteers that helped make the day so successful.



**BIG RACE AT THE PANAMA PACIFIC
INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION
OVERFAIR RAILWAY TRAIN vs. THE
RACING CAR "COMET"**

According to a photograph in a recently published book, an Overfair Railway train and the "Comet" racing car competed in a race at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915. Which one won? Sad to say, we are not told any details about the race; such as, the date, its distance, the speeds of the competitors, the location on the P.P.I.E. grounds, and, most regretfully, the winner.

The photograph appears in the book, *Images of America / San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition*, produced by the Arcadia Publishing Co. in 2005. The author is Dr. William Lipsky, a San Francisco historian. With relatively little text, the book consists predominantly of about 200 photographs, two to a page, each image with a brief caption. The caption for this photograph on page 70 reads as follows:

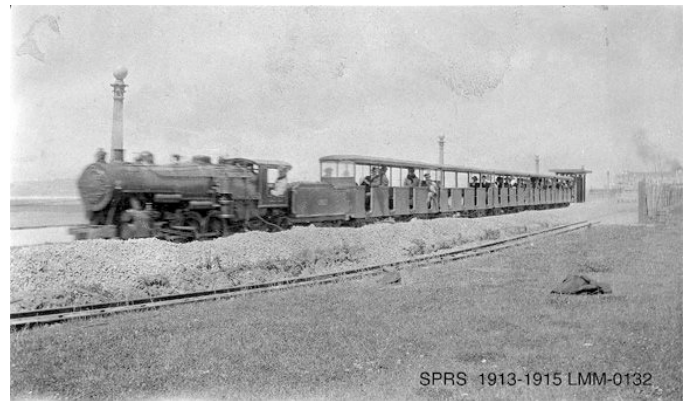
"The Overfair Railway ran on 2.5 miles of track along the northern boundary of the fairgrounds. Even at a competitive 10¢ a trip, it did not make a profit. Here, aviation daredevil Art Smith prepares to challenge the train in his midget racer, the *Comet*. Four locomotives were saved when the exposition closed. The California State Railroad Museum,

Sacramento, has one on display, and three operate on the Swanton Pacific Railroad, south of San Francisco."

The head-on view shows the locomotive lined up with a small racing car on the right. A crowd of spectators stands behind a rope on the left side, very close to the locomotive. [Close enough to receive full benefit of the smoke, exhaust, and noise as the vehicles start]. The racing car straddles the second set of tracks. It is not evident whether or not the racing car will run on level ground.

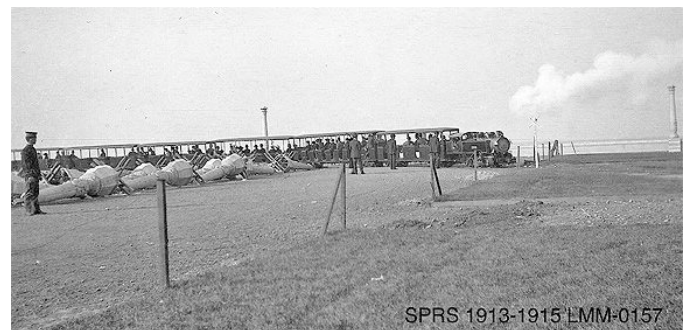
The picture's source and/or photographer are not cited anywhere in the book, nor are those details cited for any of the other photographs in the book. An extensive Internet search for combinations of key words such as P.P.I.E, *Comet* racing car, Overfair Railway, Art Smith, etc., was fruitless. Assistance in learning more about this intriguing episode will be welcomed.

Was there also a similar race between an Overfair Railway train and a Fadgl Auto Train?



Overfair train, probably at the western end of the PPIE grounds. Note the path or roadway at the left of the train. Could this be the site of the train vs. racing car contest?

SPRS No. 1913-1915 LMM-0132 (CSUF)aw



This location may be the site of the U.S. Marine Corps encampment at the western end of the P.P.I.E. grounds. The person standing at the left is in a uniform, as well as most of the persons on the train. What are the cocoon-shaped objects at center left?

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