

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 173

Cal Poly

Mar. 2008

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

With all the rains, Feb. has been quite a productive month—six known volunteers got a year older and hopefully wiser, and many activities were undertaken. On Friday of the work weekend, Pete, Edski, Bill, Bob and I, arrived to begin work on inspecting the track and removing storm debris at Cosgrove and Redwood Sq. Later, we procured all the materials needed to commence work on the railroad station to be ready for Saturday's crew. [A special thanks goes to Randy for contacting a contractor to remove all the roofing materials so that our volunteers could start right in on Sat..] Approximately twenty volunteers arrived on Saturday and by the end of the day—painting, car work, engine, gardening, and clean up tasks had been done, as well as a good start on the station.

After the Board Meeting, Sun., work continued on the station, in the car barn, on the grounds, and in the machine shop. By Sun. evening, it was obvious that the station would not be completed to meet County timeline inspection requirements. So it was decided to have a special team concentrate only on the station. The following weekend Pete, Bill, Richard, Randy and I worked together with a professional carpenter and finished up the work required to pass the first inspection. To which I again thank Randy for taking care of the logistics and paperwork in order to get the inspection done. I would also like to express my thanks and gratitude to the special work crew that took their time to come and spend an extra two days to see the project through. It is the dedication of the volunteers to this organization that make being Director so rewarding. My thanks to ALL of you for all you do.

Down Behind the Railway

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

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My fellow Swantoons:

Al Smith Day is soon upon us and there are some things that really should be accomplished before we have our celebration:

-  The speaker wires that are now a clothes line between the BBQ lamp posts need to be buried underground in conduit.
-  The wash-up sink needs to be leveled and cleaned up.
-  It would be nice to have the Maxwell car cleaned, painted, and signage applied.
-  Clear the right of way of debris.

If you would like to be the lead on any of these projects please let me or Ed know, we have the tools, just not enough hands.

During our February Board meeting we reviewed our project list; noting some completions and adding some new projects. I'll include some highlights in my next report.

Come on over for our spring cleaning, we'll have fun.

Fitz

In the Roundhouse

with Randy Jones

At the Jan. workday, Mark Franceschi helped me weld up the parts for the prototype brake beams for the Keystone cars. This has been a long process, beginning with Fitz, Geoff and I coming up with the concept, and then Geoff engineering and milling the parts. In February, Fitz, Richard and I fitted them into the frame and made the connecting levers. The

job tested out very well, so now we can fabricate five more for the remaining trucks. Fitz has nearly completed the re-piping of Edski's Keystone project car, so that is progressing nicely. There's a lot of carpentry still to be done, so see Edski if you want to help out.

Bruce Compiano and I started a list of annual maintenance work due on the 502. There's plenty of "fun and dirty" work for anyone interested. We are also looking forward to getting all the Locos wired for the emergency brake system, so there's lots to do in March, both indoors and out. The annual car inspections are due too, if we can get "rack" time for them. It will make for a busy Spring, if the weather will just cooperate.

The motorcar "double-naught" required some unexpected attention in Feb. The engine appeared frozen, but fortunately it was revealed that only the starter motor gear was jammed in the flywheel. Many hours were spent on the difficult repair by Ed, Pete, and some of "the usual suspects", but special note must be paid to Bob Wilkinson for the long and frustrating work troubleshooting the electrical system to get it running again. To those I may have left out, my feeble memory and I do sincerely apologize. Hope to see all of you in March.



Pete and Bob working on motor car

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

Mar.	08/09	work weekend
April	12	getting ready for Al Smith Day Run
April	13	Al Smith Day Run
May	10	Saturday work day
May	11	GO HOME TO MOM!

There are still openings for hosting Saturday workday dinners [call or email me with your selected Saturday]. Meals can be simple or as complex as you like. All we ask is that you provide receipts for your expenses. Everyone dining is asked to donate \$5.00 for the meal. Remember in May we start with two work weekends a month so opportunities to choose a date are magnified. Last month we discovered that liver, onions, and okra ARE THE LEAST sought after dishes to serve. In other words--sign up for being in charge of a dinner in order to be assured to not have these items!

Amy and Scott were chefs for February's delicious meal. March's St. Patrick's Celebration will be provided by our very own Irish Presidential Chef—Mr. Fitz FitzPatrick—I wonder what we shall have??? We just ask that you let us know if you are staying for dinner so that shopping can be more accurately done. April's Sat. workday dinner, the dinner prior to Al Smith Day, has been spoken for, but there are still many more to follow.

The invitation for Al Smith Day has been included in the newsletter for all our volunteers and to save on a duplicate mailing. Separate mailing to our mail list will occur later this week. Please duplicate and distribute to family and friends, but also be sure to get your rsvp back to us before the deadline. We will also be asking for many of you to assist with the many tasks required to make the event successful—the usual parking, greeting, tours, serving, etc. —more next month.

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



Kyle after steam cleaning



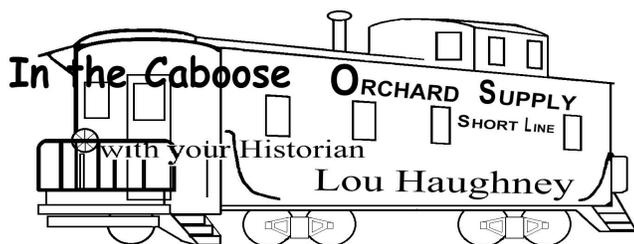
Lunch on Saturday



Working on Station roof

2008 Membership is now due

[form available on cover sheet]



Louis M. MacDermot's Friends and Railroading Historians in the San Francisco Bay Area

A recent article about MacDermot's operations at the Oakland Zoo mentioned Ralph Demoro, who was one of the few close friends that MacDermot

had in the 1930's and the early 1940's. Ralph Demoro was among those railroading enthusiasts who recorded in writing and photography railroading history of the San Francisco Bay and the Central California areas during the mid 1900's. A lengthy obituary describes his professional and avocational careers.

Oakland Tribune Wed., July 12, 1973

Rail historian Rafael Demoro dies

ALAMEDA Rafael Wilkins Demoro, a leading authority on the history of California and its railroads, died yesterday at the age of 77.

"Ralph" Demoro's camera vividly documented much of early California's colorful railway history.

"He was one of the very first people to take pictures of trains," said his son, Harre W. Demoro. "He began taking pictures back in the days when you first could buy amateur cameras."

Demoro took his first pictures in Marin County in 1918, "and he took his last about three weeks ago of an Amtrak train in Benicia when I was with him", remembered Harre, a former Tribune transit writer.

Demoro was a pharmacist from 1920 to 1975, and worked for more than 20 drugstores in the Eastbay and San Francisco. He...retired in 1972.

Many experiences in Demoro's background encouraged his interest in trains, streetcars and ferryboats: as a pharmacist's apprentice for a drugstore on Union Street in his native San Francisco, Demoro made his daily deliveries on the city's streetcars, and during his summers in Glen Ellen became the protégé of a locomotive engineer who taught him to operate steam locomotives. ...

He took about 10,000 railroad, ferryboat, and ships pictures, and another 10,000 on California and Nevada history. He had an enormous collection. He was a guy who got all of the railroad enthusiasts started back in the 1930s".

Harre Demoro said that many of his father's photographs have appeared in leading transit books, and magazines. Those magazines include "Railroad Magazine", "Western Railroader" and the more contemporary "Pacific News". ...

A prolific historian, Demoro helped to found the California-Nevada [Railroad] Historical Society and the Golden State Transportation Historical Society.

He was also a member of the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association.

Ralph's son, Harre, continued his father's hobby. Harre wrote many articles in the *Oakland Tribune* and *the Western Railroader* about MacDermot and particularly about Bob Maxfield's revival of the 1913 at Calistoga, as recounted in previous SPRS issues. As well as continuing his father's photographic practices, Harre Demoro was also a prolific author of many books about railroads and the ferries of this region. Where are the Demoros' photo collections now?

As noted in the previous article on MacDermot and the Oakland Zoo, MacDermot was an active member of the California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society; and, many of the CNRHS meetings were held at MacDermot's mansion in west Oakland. Bob Parkinson, a teen-aged member of the CNRHS in those days, has provided a brief account of the railroading associations that were active in the mid 1900's.

The California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society started in 1936. The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society with headquarters in Boston dated from the 1920's. The CNRHS objected to western railroad relics and memorabilia being sent back east. At the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in the San Francisco bay, the CNRHS, though not a model railroad club, manned an exhibit of a model RR, and also had an exhibit of railroad pictures. The R&LHS had at the Fair an old station waiting room, with a lady and gentleman in period costume sitting while waiting for a train. The persons were trained in immobility, so visitors were not sure whether they were real persons or dummies. This exhibit was probably the work of Frederic Shaw. Prior to the 1940 Fair, a number of R&LHS members quit that Society and formed the San Francisco branch of the Railroadians of America. Shaw was West Coast representative of the Railroadians. So in 1940, this exhibit was by the Railroadians. Later, there were members who belonged to both CNRHS and Railroadians.

The Railroadians published a yearly calendar. This consisted of text and pictures of pertinent regional railroading subjects that were printed on poster board 11 inches by 19 inches with a small monthly calendar attached at the bottom. The 1954 version was devoted to



A delegation from the Railroadians of America, San Francisco Branch, visited Billy Jones' Wildcat Railroad on September 12, 1954. This picture shows them standing alongside the Overfair Railway's 0-4-0T work locomotive. The group includes many of the leading railroad enthusiasts in the S. F. Bay area, most of whom were associated directly or indirectly with Louis M. MacDermot. Left to right:

1. Vernon Sappers, a leading historian of electric railways, active in the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association and the Western Railway Museum;
2. Ralph W. Demoro, close friend of MacDermot, founding member of the California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society, compiler of large photographic collection;
3. Harre Demoro, son of Ralph, writer for the *Oakland Tribune* and the *Western Railroader*, photographer and author of many books on railroads in the San Francisco Bay and the central California areas;
4. Frederic "Cap" Shaw, regional representative of the Railroadians of America, author of *The Little Railways of the World* and other similar books, owner with Quentin Jervis of the Overfair 1914 and 1500 locomotives after Jones' death;
5. Robert Parkinson, current SPRS member, member of the CNRHS and the Railroadians, researcher in railroad and maritime history of the S. F. Bay area, particularly of MacDermot and the Overfair Railway;
6. Buell Edison, Railroadians member;
7. Paul Darrell, Chairman of the Railroadians Calendar Committee, compiler of a large railroad photograph collection, which is now at the California State Railroad Museum.

"The Overfair Railway, Ferries to Race Track, the Biggest 10¢ Ride on the Fair Grounds".

The "acknowledgements" list several persons connected, more or less, with MacDermot and the Overfair Railway. For example, "thanks to Ralph W. Demoro ... for photographs, to Paul Darrell for text preparation with material furnished by Frederic Shaw".

The material above is based upon the vast railroading and maritime historical files of Bob Parkinson and upon his personal recollections. I have made only slight editing changes to his contributions to our files.