

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 175

Cal Poly

May 2008

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

What an event! Al Smith Day has come and gone and again I thank ALL that participated in making it such a memorable day. Our attendance was right at 500 and even though at one time the lunch line appeared lengthy—everyone was served within 45 minutes. This is an excellent reflection on the experienced BBQ crew of Swanton Pacific RR. And in a like manner, the overall railroad and ranch operations were flawless too. Nothing but compliments were expressed or overheard from those attending. From the time someone set foot on the property, ‘till their leaving, every facet of the day’s event flowed together nicely. Beginning with the weather, that was unusually warm, but very pleasant, train rides were abundant, but never over crowded. They operated flawlessly and professionally for everyone’s enjoyment. The ranch’s displays, logging team and roping demos were well received as were all the tours. The volunteers that greeted our guests as they parked, registered or purchased merchandise were ambassadors of goodwill for Swanton Pacific and Cal Poly. So many of the first time visitors were awe struck as they rounded the corner by the Santa Fe caboose. The new awning for the historical SPRR made that portion of the day far more enjoyable to absorb Swanton’s Railroad history. Many also enjoyed the small, but delightful display of old cars. Al would have been extremely pleased with the entire day, and especially with the abundance and variety of sweets brought by so many volunteers and guests. As you know—the success of such an event just doesn’t happen. It takes the team effort of many and my thanks go out

to all that helped in so many different ways, including one of the best cleanup crews we’ve seen over the past few years. Thank you thank you.

On Friday, a new milestone was set in that the irrigation system was set up enough to begin using it in the train field by being able to supply water from our tank car. Two loads from the tank car will water all 456 trees recently planted and still surviving. Survival is currently under the diligent care of Pete, Ernie [railroaders] and Ben Jansen from the ranch providing TLC approximately every 10 days.

Plans are now being made for our next project which is to remove some more of the code violations, i.e. the rebuilding of the car-barn storage. Hopefully in May we will be able to clear some area in the car-barn storage area, in order to remove the west end and part of the roof to allow for accurate measurement for the steel trusses that will be used in the final rebuild. This will allow us to order most of the hardware so that when summer comes we will have a running start on this phase of the project.

As May begins our two work weekends a month, I also realize with the soaring prices of fuel many may not be able to come both work weekends. However, whichever one you can attend will be greatly appreciated and work on projects will continue, but with priorities placed on continuing to remove the code violations. And as always we are looking for new volunteers so I would encourage each of you to invite a friend or two to carpool, come work out at the beautiful Swanton Pacific Fitness Center, and enjoy making and meeting new friends.

Hope to see you May 10, but remind all that Sunday is Mother’s Day. The fourth weekend is the Memorial Day weekend. See ya’.

Down Behind the Railway

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

My Fellow Swantoons:

Hooray, hooray, the first of May ... original summer begins this day (or complete with your own favorite rhyme).

The Queen of May leading a parade of nobles, soldiers with “gunes and pykes”, and common folk to where Morris dancers wove ribbons around the May pole was, and still is some places, an annual celebration of the beginning of summer and the end of dreary wet cold winter, June 25th being Midsummer. Speechifying by notables, promises of undying love, games and revelry all a part of the traditional festivities. We humans do love a party

Other commemorations of May include; the Soviet Mayday parade with the display of weaponry and military might that is not so different from the guns and pikes of yore, for those of a Germanic persuasion we have Walpurgisnacht, the socialist have International Labor Day, and here in the US of A the eight hour workday which is credited to Chicago Haymarket Riot Martyrs of 1886.

And speaking of workdays, on May 10th we will start rebuilding the railcar shed – another County compliance project. Actually we will be un-building western, track side, end to better determine the location of the new roof’s ledger and help us define a schedule of demolition and reconstruction. This project will probably span a couple of months due to availability of manpower, scheduled inspections, material delivery, etc., all on a Swanton timetable.

We, as a society, are beginning to have a problem and you may have the solution. I may ramble somewhat in the description of the problem and what I see as means of resolving it, so please bear with me.

We are an operating museum where our equipment is not only on display but actually operates in a fashion similar to its design – in our case a ‘people mover’ of the early 20th century. Unlike a museum with static pieces, which require a curator, docent, and someone to dust off the displays, we need track crew, conductors, firemen, engineers, mechanics, pipe fitters, maintenance

techs, woodworkers, carpenters, electricians, clerks, historians, signalmen, instructors – all the folk a railroad such as UP would need to maintain their equipment and facilities.

Locomotive engineers are representative of the problem. The pipeline to becoming an engineer includes qualification as a conductor, motorman, and fireman. While we have some folk in the pipeline we need more to keep the railway running.

Those of us who are active participants all have more than one job within the railway and while this is to be expected within an organization as small as ours it results in various projects taking years to accomplish.

We have several young folk who are becoming qualified in various aspects and they are truly appreciated, however we know from our personal lives that education, gainful employment, and familial demands often restrict one’s ability to volunteer for additional duties.

We think we need that fiftyish, retired (or ready to retire) person who would like to fulfill a lifelong dream of being a railroad engineer. Or, as with me at the invitation of a friend, find an entirely different career without the pressure of having to make a living.

Our “Build it and they will come” practice does not seem to be successful. Do you have any expertise in recruitment? We of the hands-on denomination could use some help.

Hope to see you on the workday.

Fitz



Visitors ready to board train



1912 fueled up and ready for first run



Logging team demonstrating two man sawing

NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTER

Tom Bowman San Jose

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.



A demonstration of competition log cutting



Daffodil pickers at Folger



502 ready for the first run after lunch

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

- May 10 Saturday work day
- May 11 GO HOME TO MOM!
- May 30-31 Memorial Day SPRR Work weekend
- June 14/15 work weekend
- June 28/29 work weekend

In May, we begin with our two work weekends a month. Saturday night's culinary treat will be compliments of chef Martha Neilsen. So it is requested that if you plan on staying for dinner please call or email us with your rsvp. This only allows the chef to better prepare for the numbers attending. Opportunities to sign up for June, July

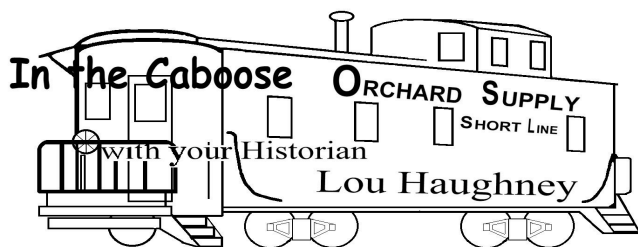
and for that matter the rest of the year are still available for any volunteer to host or co-host with others. It is hoped that many will step up to the stove plate and not leave the cooking always to same few. We all enjoy trying out the culinary delights of our many volunteers.

I too would like to thank everyone of you for all your efforts given in some many different ways to help make the 15th Annual Al Smith Day so successful. Kudos to all, but most of all to Al for giving us the facilities to share with all. I look forward to sharing many memorable times this coming summer at either the work weekends, upcoming events, and especially for the family fun week. Should any have splendid ideas to share on things to do or try for the week, speak up and let us know so that we can plan in advance.

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.**

2008 Membership is now due

[form available on cover sheet]



OVERFAIR LOCOMOTIVES STORED AT SAN TOMAS LOT

Two more pictures have been found of the Overfair Railway locomotives stored on the vacant lot on San Tomas area of Campbell. These photos were sent by Norman W. Holmes, author of the book, *Prune Country Railroad / Steel Rails to San Jose*. These two photos seem to be part of a similar set found two years ago in Al Smith's collections at his Los Gatos house; they have no inscriptions on their backs. Those from Holmes have a hand

written date on the back side of April 6, 1949. Louis M. MacDermot died on February 22, 1948. So, the locomotives were still sitting in Jones' vacant lots some 14 months after MacDermot's death. Perhaps, that much time was needed to settle MacDermot's estate before ownership would pass to Jones.



This picture below appears to be the 1913 because the boiler cover is missing except for a fragment adjacent to the cab. While operating at the Oakland Zoological Gardens in the early 1940's before being moved to Jones' property about 1945, MacDermot operated the 1913 without its boiler shield. Yet, one photo of that era does show a fragmented cover on the boiler. See the article "Puzzle of the Missing Boiler Jacket" in the Feb. 2008 newsletter. The set of similar photos found in Al Smith's house were published in the Jan. 2007 issue of this newsletter.



Our thanks to Norman Holmes for contributing his photos to our collection. They add to our knowledge about the period immediately after MacDermot's death. Are there any other similar photos somewhere? I continue to be amazed by the many different sources that have images and articles, often identical or similar, for the various stages of the Overfair Railway equipment.