

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 179

Cal Poly

Oct. 2008

### **ON TRACK with your Director**

Ed Carnegie:

September was a very busy month for Swanton Pacific Railroad volunteers, but as always, our volunteers were amazing in getting so much accomplished. With just two-work weekends a month, a major project, the rebuilding of the Car Barn, the annual Land Trust Picnic, and some other special projects were successfully completed. By special projects, I mean projects that were not planned, but came up and needed to be done. Beginning on August 25, when it became necessary to bring the 1913's boiler back to SPRR for further study and in order to make a decision on what to do next. Then problems, with the power trucks, on the 502 diesel-engine surfaced. Randy and crew pulled it out-of-service to make the necessary repairs and to hopefully have it operational for the upcoming Land Trust Picnic. After many late hours, put in by Randy and Bruce, the 502 was once again operational Sunday morning, just in time for a successful run for Land Trust Picnic.

After the first September work weekend of devoting several intense hours on the car barn--we realized that additional, and perhaps more youthful, carpentry help would be advantageous. We jokingly, but appreciatively, brought in the "A" team. The following Tuesday, three journeymen carpenters, along with Fitz, Pete, and myself teamed up to complete the task of placing, nailing, and hammering the roof on the Car Barn. In two-and-one-half days the roof was on, and with the assistance of the "A" team, our Swanton volunteers were not as worn out.

This past weekend, efforts concentrated on clean-up work in order to make our facilities look good for the upcoming events. If you have not turned your reservations in for Cal Poly Day please let us know for better planning and for re-enforcing the saying that "many hands make for less tasks for all". We always have a lot to do just before an event, so come over, have fun, and help out.

### **Down Behind the Railway**

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

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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My Fellow Swantoons:

Let's start with a little rhyme about autumn;

"Corn and grain, corn and grain,  
all that falls shall rise again."

And what has risen is the car shed, now awaiting metal cladding, just in time for fall's inclement weather. With the roof deck on we, read Pete, have placed the cars under cover.

Cal Poly day, October 12<sup>th</sup>, is our last public run for the year, aside from our semi-private New Year's run. Any, and all, members who are planning to attend please consider staying after the festivities and help cleanup.

Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at noon we will hold our first General Meeting of the year with a Special Order of Business – the nomination of candidate for the offices of President, Second VP – Operations, Fourth VP – Engines & Rolling Stock, and Secretary. In accord with our by-laws, nominations may be made from the floor, via mail, e-mail, or even passenger pigeon provided they are received

by an officer prior to our November General Meeting.

Following the special order of business the floor will be open for any other business legally presented.

With the car shed nearly completed hopefully we can return to some of the maintenance and building projects in the car shop that have been on hold while cars and material have been stored on the shop floor.

Completing the Keystone car is high on the list. We have one completed truck with the new brake foundation, and as the car didn't wind up at Cosgrove when I pushed it out the door and pulled on a rope tied to the hand brake it passed the braking test. I'd really like to try it using air.

Pete, a man of many projects, has his heart set on having a new work car by next spring. This requires building two trucks for the steel flat car frame now sitting by San Vicente, steel decking and some steel furniture. Any one who would like to work on this project come see our man.

Several, if not all, passenger cars need paint – especially the floors, and now we have room to work on them. A nice inside winter project if you like.

As always there is the usual housekeeping, not glorious but necessary.

Come on over, we'll have fun.

Fitz



Andy, Randy and Fitz unloading the 1913 boiler from the Swanton Ranch trailer.



Train load of visitors at the Santa Cruz Land Trust Day



Fascia board ready to install on West end of car barn storage building.



The 1914 is ready to push the work car home during the last run of the day.

**UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY**

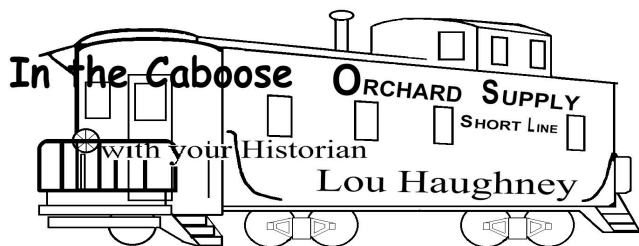
Mary Ann Carnegie

- Oct. 11 work day
- Oct. 12 **CAL POLY RUN DAY**
- Nov. 08/09 work day weekend
- Dec. 13/14 work day weekend
- Dec. 31 New Year's Eve run

With a successful Land Trust Run-day behind us, we are now working on hosting the upcoming Cal Poly Day Run—Sunday, Oct. 12, followed by our annual New Year's Eve Run. There are many tasks that need to be done in order to make the event successful—before, during and after the event. So everyone's assistance is welcomed in various capacities—cleaning, serving, cooking, serving, shopping, registration, sales, train operations, general hosting, clean-up, etc. etc. etc. Currently we have received a good response from the invites sent out, BUT we do need to verify how many of our volunteers will be attending and helping that day—please RSVP ASAP.

Workday dinner for the Sat. prior to Cal Poly Day will be provided, but confirmation for lodging arrangements should also be confirmed. We look forward to hearing from you. PLEASE: Call (805) 995-3659 or e-mail [ecarnegi@calpoly.edu](mailto:ecarnegi@calpoly.edu). Facilities are limited & we want to make sure to accommodate all.

Also note that beginning in October we go back to having only one work weekend a month. With the rainy season soon approaching you may want to instill the Boy Scout motto of getting "prepared". Rain gear, etc.



**STOPPING THE OVERFAIR TRAINS on a DIME!**

While selecting photos for last month's article, Chris and I noticed a surprising feature of the tracks in front of the locomotive where it was parked on the south side of the Machinery

Palace. Did you notice it in last issue's Figures 3 and 4? Figure 1a in this issue is a repeat of Figure 3 from last issue.



Figure 1a. Overfair Rwy eastern terminal at Machinery Palace/Main Yard. SPRS 1913-1915 LMM-0060 Al Smith Collection

Note that the track ends shortly in front of the first wheels! There is no end-of-track barrier of any kind! So, we examined other similar photos and found the same situation; namely, that the rails end without any

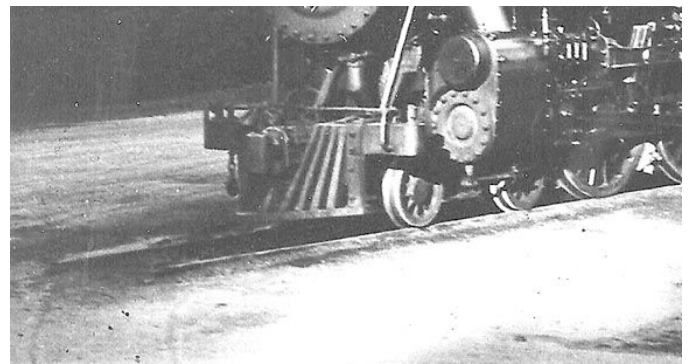


Figure 1b. Enlarged view of tracks underneath front of locomotive at south side of Machinery Palace. SPRS 1013-1915 LMM-0060cr

safeguard just in front of the locomotive. An enlarged image of that area, Figure 1b, confirms our initial interpretation.

See Figures 2a and 2b for another example. Also, a similar photograph hanging in the OSH caboose very clearly shows the abrupt, unguarded end-of-track.

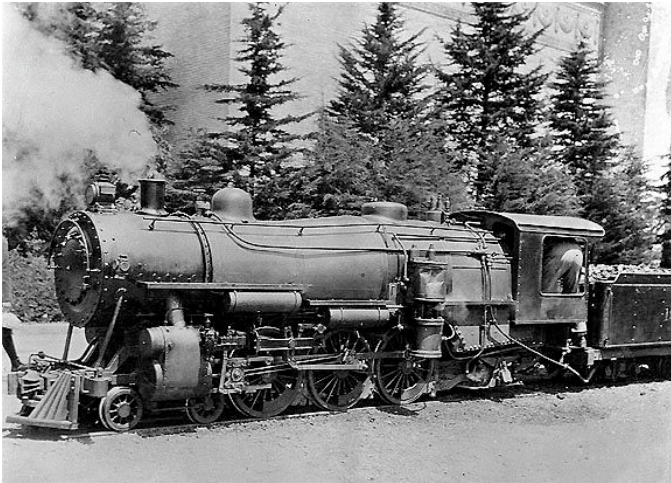


Figure 2a. Overfair locomotive 1913 at terminal on south side of Machinery Palace. SPRS 1913-1915 LMM-0104

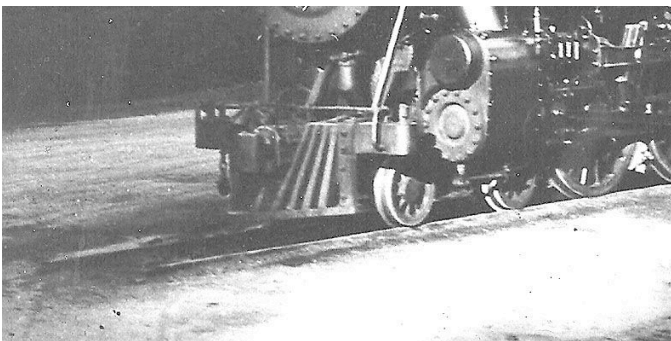


Figure 2b. Enlarged view of tracks underneath front of locomotive at south side of Machinery Palace. SPRS 1913-1915 LMM-0060cr

The Overfair Railway's engineers must have been quite proficient to stop the train just a few feet before running off the end of the track. Note also that the tracks in this location run along a main street between the south side of the Machinery Palace and the Southern Pacific Railroad Building. No fence is visible to separate the train tracks from pedestrians and vehicles in that street. Photos taken in other locations show the trains moving across plazas and open areas in the midst of gardens and

thoroughfares. (Figure 3, and another photo in the OSH caboose.)



Figure 3. Locomotive No. 1912 with yacht harbor on the left. Notice pedestrian walk ways on either side of tracks. Agriculture Place in right background SPRS 1913-1915 LMM-0050 Al Smith Collection.

In a discussion of this situation, Ken Fischer and Geoff Tobin pointed out that an experienced engineer can stop precisely at a desired point if he/she has a marker at that place. Much more desirable is to assign one or more railway staff members at that spot to direct both the engineer and the people and vehicles passing by the unguarded tracks. Neither a marker nor "crossing guards" are visible in the photos.

In those days, the safety features of a railway's right-of-way were apparently much less stringent than those of today, as demonstrated by the extensive safeguards along the tracks of the CalTrain on the Peninsula and the VTA's Light Rail System In the San Jose region.

Thanks to Ken and Geoff for their comments and explanations, which are based on their experiences in stopping the Swanton Pacific locomotives on the end of track at the SPRR's wye. Chris Taylor processed the images.

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