

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 186

Cal Poly

May 2009

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

What a wonderful Al Smith Day we had. My sincere thanks to all that jumped in and gave a helping hand. The engine and machine shop crew, under the leadership of Randy Jones, performed a Herculean task to have our steam engines operational for the day's runs. As usual, the Cal Poly cooking team, assisted by the SPRR volunteers provided an outstanding meal for all, which was topped off with a vast variety of scrumptious desserts provided by many in the typical Al Smith Day tradition. The car-barn crew, under Fitz's leadership, serviced and checked out all the cars prior to operation. Special thanks goes to ALL that put in the extra little touches, either on a workday, or for taking an extra trip to Swanton to just take care of something in order to make the day even more special. Our appreciation also goes to the Cal Poly Logging Team for jumping in to assist with parking, and then switching over to sawing, and chopping for a crowd-pleasing demonstration. In addition to getting ready for Al Smith Day, the Christmas Tree Crew, under Pete's guidance, finished installing the irrigation system, and hauled water to irrigate all 700 plus trees. And finally--last, but not least, the day would not have been nearly as successful without the diligent organization, and management of the activities provided by my wife, Mary Ann.

With the success of Al Smith Day behind us, and good weather ahead of us, I look forward to sharing the upcoming work weekends with many of you. So come on over to Swanton when you have an opportunity, but be sure to let me know, as over night facilities will be limited at times during the summer months.

Down Behind the Railway

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

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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HEADQUARTERS

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

General Orders No. 11 [in part]

Washington D.C. May 5, 1868

The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet church-yard in the land.

And so began, with General John Logan's order, a Decoration Day, which evolved into our Memorial Day. In 1915, inspired by the poem In Flanders Fields, Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

We cherish too, the Poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led,
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies.

She started the wearing of red poppies to honor those who died in war and sold them with the monies received going to servicemen in need. In 1922 the VFW began selling artificial poppies made by disabled veterans and in their 1923 encampment their "Buddy" Poppy program was established. While May 30th was often referred to as Memorial Day rather than Decoration Day since the late 1890's it didn't get federal recognition until 1971 as part of the Uniform Holidays Bill.

Prof. B. Roisin, a Belgian, penned an article, webwise, of which the following is part:

Growing up in the wake of World War II

... And, during summer vacations, Dad would make a detour and have us visit American cemeteries. I must confess that initially I found them boring. With all those identical crosses! After all, "so what", I thought "the war is over, and this only serves to rehash the ugly past and to delay us in reaching our holiday destination", until one day, in one of those cemeteries - this one in Luxemburg, I recall - my father impressed on all of us children that below every cross lay a young man who had left his beloved family in America to fight in foreign soil and deliver from a wicked enemy my Belgian family who could not defend itself. "You can't go by on the road and not come in to say thank you", he added and then fell in a deep silence. Gratitude! Gratitude! This is what he was teaching me.

Childhood recollection by Professor Benoit Roisin [Copyright, 2000]

And for the pure railroad fans: On May 10, 1868 there was a "wedding of the rails," ceremony at Promontory Point, Utah.

Over here at Swanton we will be volunteering on our workday Saturday the 9th, Sunday being a Gold Spike day as well as Mother's Day - so we don't have much planned.

May is the month we start having two workdays a month and, as the 30th is a Saturday, it will be a three day weekend, and for some a 3 day workday. Dare I say three dog night? "To weave our dreams upon and listening to a song."

I could use some help in cutting parts for Keystone passenger trucks.

EdSki could use some help with the decking on the passenger car.

The original MacD passenger car needs an intensive survey before restoration. Would you like to be its champion?

The turntable could use another turning arm, welder required.

The wheelchair lift car needs work on aligning the safety's and weight balancing.

As always, there is housekeeping.

So far the response to our survey has been underwhelming, help us out folks. I can put pipe together like a madman, but I'm just not that good at finding your desires at Swanton.

We are getting close to requesting bids on replacing the firebox for the 1913, and just in time as the '12 & '14 are about to give us grief.

Economy. I knew you were thinking about it, hard to avoid. The Society is still above water, as it were, for normal operating expenses, but we have two major issues; repairing the '13's boiler and replacing our worn out lathe.

Do you happen to have an extra 15" x 60" lathe taking up space you would like to donate?

I don't believe we will be having a 'bake sale' to fund the boiler and lathe, but if we do I'd go for Martha's apple crisp and Amy's cookies.

Almost the end now, Brooks and I were talking about the newsletter and how my articles are titled "Down Behind the Railway". That line is part of the chorus of Thomas F. Casey's (1888) "Drill ye Terriers, Drill"

In a music hall parody of labor relations at the time the following stanzas are my favorite.

Our new foreman was Jim McCann.
By God, he was a damn mean man.
Last week a premature blast went off.
A mile in the sky went big Jim Goff.

And drill ye terriers, drill,
Drill ye terriers, drill.
For it's work all day for the sugar in your tay,
Down behind the railway.
And drill ye terriers, drill.
And blast, and fire.

The next time payday came around,
A dollar short Jim Goff was found.
When he asked what for came this reply,
"You're docked for the time you was up in the sky."

And last, for all those of you who were under arms, or close kin, in peace and war, we don't forget.

*In time of trouble and in war . . .
God and soldier all men adore.
But when war is over and all things righted . . .
God is forgotten, and the soldier slighted.*

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

- May 9 Workday
- May 10 Mother's Day— celebrate with MOM
- May 23/24/25 Memorial Day work weekend
- June 13/14 work weekend & Father's Day Special

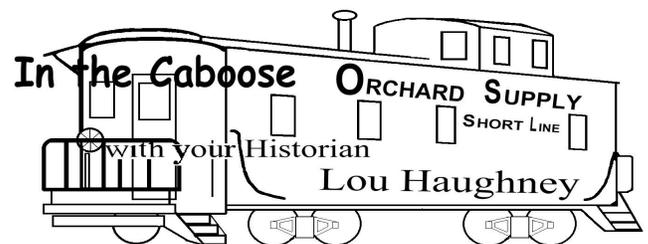
Once again a most successful Al Smith Day came and went. And again, many many compliments were heard or expressed by those in attendance. So, a huge thank you goes out to ALL of you that were there before, during or after and helped in any capacity to make the event so successful. Every contribution made was very much appreciated.

With May upon us, we remind all that we now have two work weekends each month—the second and fourth Saturdays. We know that everyone has busy schedules, etc., but we do hope that you will be able to make it to one, if not both, of the bi-monthly gatherings. We also hope that in the coming months, you will volunteer to sign up for demonstrating your culinary delights for one of the Saturday night dinners. These dinners can range from being very very simple, to whatever your heart desires. Just know that the majority has voted that liver, onions, and okra are not the favorites of many. We would also request that if you are the chef for the night, that your receipts are provided for bookkeeping purposes, and to make sure that expenses are covered by the \$5.00/person donation for the provided meal.

That's all for now, but start thinking of the ideas, meals, and things to do for SPRR's annual family week coming up soon [July 25-Aug. 2]. Know we will be doing some Dutch-oven cooking for the evening meals, perhaps some star gazing, telling some wild and telling tales, watch outdoor movies, and what ever else might be brought on the agenda??? Let us know of your ideas.



One for the road



SCOTT CREEK FLOODS IN THE 1980's

Three floods have washed out the bridge over Scott Creek; two in the 1980's and then the Feb. 1998 deluge that gave the coup de grace to flat-car spans used earlier to carry the tracks over the creek. The envelope marked "flood" in Al Smith's snapshot collection holds about 50 pictures showing flood damage and recovery in the 1980's. Only one photo has a date, "Feb. 1982"; this view shows the erosion in one of the fields rather than damage to the tracks. With some misgiving, I have used that date for the other pictures in this "flood" group.



Early view Al Smith Day



Feb. 1982 Flood Damage, pump house, worker's camp in background up to 8' of erosion



Collapsed flat car bridge and track, flood of Feb. 1982



Installing flat car bridge over Scott Creek after flood of Feb. 1982



Track damaged by flood waters



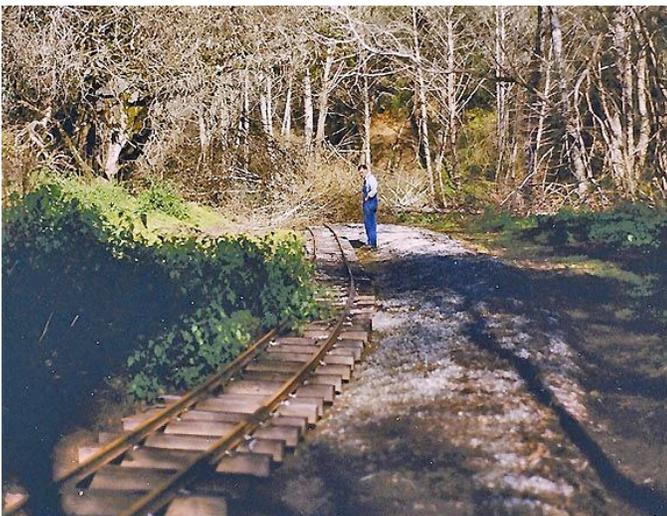
Crossing Scott Creek on the reconstructed bridge after the Feb. 1982 Flood

The Weather Bureau's climatic records were examined for the Santa Cruz City and the "Ben Lomond 4" sites. These records show well above normal rainfall in the first three months of both 1982 and 1983; specifically 43.91 inches and 58.32 inches respectively for the Ben Lomond 4 location. So, the first washout of the Scott Creek bridge may have happened in early 1983.

A second period of excessive rainfall occurred in the first three months of 1986, 49.27 inches at the Ben Lomond 4 station. After 1986, the precipitation was near or often below normal until the mid 1990's. Starting in 1995, rainfall increased and climaxed in Feb. 1998 with a record monthly total of 27.968 inches at the Ben Lomond 4 site. That's when the Scott Creek bridge collapsed for the third time.

The normal (mean) rainfall from 1972 to 2008 for those three months is 26.85 inches at the Ben Lomond 4 location. The data for the City of Santa Cruz show identical trends in rainfall measurements.

If anyone has more specific knowledge of dates for 1980's events, please tell us so that we can correct our data about the photographs.



Charlie Hoyle inspecting track damage from flood of Feb. 1982