ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

This has become a time of trials and tribulations. Over the past two years we have tried to find a solution to the undercutting from Scotts Creek on the North Revetment of the Carnegie Bridge. First, we attempted a temporary fix in hopes of getting permission to repair the protective crib wall to the North of the revetment. However, this winter, before Christmas, heavy rains removed the temporary fix, as well as removing a substantial amount of soil from under the revetment. All was thought to be in order for an emergency repair; so a sheet pile driving crane was ordered to be on site to begin work. However, shortly after getting everything set up to start, a stop work order was issued from the Corps of Eng. We are now in the midst of trying to find a way to save the Carnegie Bridge, and the North Revetment. The Swanton Ranch personnel and student interns have provided great assistance in this effort. Special thanks need to go to resource manager, Steve Auten, for the many hours in getting the roads and area ready, administrative coordinator, Susan Burgess for helping with paper work and being available, and last but not least, Ranch Director, Brian Dietterick for all of his coordination with all government agencies, and endless phone calls. Thank you!

On top of this, on December 23, my son’s body was found drowned in Morro Bay where he, Brad slipped and fell from a work-boat he was working and living on. The kind support, and well wishes that has been extended to my family and me has been most gratifying to us all during this very difficult time. Many heartfelt thanks to all of you.

This week I received a note from Jim Gaddis that Mac Gaddis is not well, and the family would appreciate our thoughts and prayers.

It’s through difficult times when friends and associates come together to help one another that makes being involved in activities like SPRS so rewarding. We feel so very fortunate to have such special friends here at Swanton.

I am happy to report the New Year’s Eve celebration was a great success. All that attended said the food was great. Good times were had by all.

Down Behind the Railway

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

My Fellow Swantoons:

“May you live in interesting times” is communally referred to as ancient Chinese curse. It sounds like the wisdom of the ages applicable to our own, and where better to seek ancient wisdom than the Chinese? Not necessarily so, perhaps it came from Pharaohic Egypt, as some think, or even Scottish Celts. In my review it appears to be from American and English literature of the last century. There is a corollary, “May the government be aware of you”, which is more troubling.

And it is interesting times we are living in. Scott Creek has scoured the creek bed below the north revetment of the bridge and, as of the middle of January, we hope to get permission to install some sheet piling before the bridge falls into the creek. No matter the outcome, we have to thank the Ranch Director, Brian Dietterick, for an amazing amount of time and effort he expended working with the various governmental agencies.

Thanks Brian!!

Our first Executive Board meeting of 2011 will be on Sunday, February 13th in the Red House. The
majority of the meeting will be devoted to establishing priorities on our project-list, the major items are: the rebuild of the 1913, and track work near the bridge. All members are welcome to attend. Following the meeting I will list the projects in the March newsletter.

As always, some projects are languishing as they do not have a champion. That hero could be you.

Come on over and we'll have fun and build something.

Fitz

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY
Mary Ann Carnegie

Feb. 12/13  work weekend
March 12/13  work weekend

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, we hear New Year’s Eve celebration was a huge success – potluck, train rides, great bonfire, Ken’s traditional hot cider, and sky lighting ceremony. Thanks to all of you that worked to make it so. We did get to see all the hard work that many of you put into decorating the facilities and making it so festive for all to enjoy.

The upcoming workdays will hinge heavily on what will be decided about the bridge, along with trying to get ready for, what we hope will continue to be, our ANNUAL Al Smith Day. The daylight hours are increasing daily, and better weather is also coming. So, many of the out-door projects will be increasing. We hope you will un-hibernate, and come on over to Swanton to partake in our wonderful outdoor “Swanton Gym”. And if not there, then perhaps you will want to help out by sharing your culinary delights for those, hungry and most appreciative group of workers, who stay to dine on the Saturday night workday dinners. These are always very special, and allow all of us to get to visit and build some great bonds of friendships. We shall look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Working on getting the bridge ready

This article's images are a sample of 210 snapshots that Louis M. MacDermot, before his death in 1947, gave to Charlie Hoyle. They present an intriguing puzzle as to what they portray. There are no identifying legends, dates, nor explanations accompanying the collection, which is a batch of silver nitrate negatives, about 100 years old, in fair to poor condition.

Unfortunately, they show nothing about MacDermot's Overfair Railway. Rather, they appear to be a photographic record of the MacDermot Family’s "Grand Tour" of the United States and Europe. Louis was the second of four siblings; namely, an older sister, a younger sister, and a young brother. They were born over a span of ten years.

The only clue, so far, as to the photos' dates is given by the photo of the Eiffel Tower. That picture must have been taken either in 1900 or within a few years thereafter. Look at the large circular structure in the faint background at the right side behind the Eiffel Tower. That structure is probably the large Ferris wheel built on the grounds of the Exposition Universelle de 1900 in Paris.

Since Louis was born in 1878, he and his siblings would have been in their early 20's or late teens during the period of 1900-1905. Certainly
the ages of the young persons in these pictures fit into that age category

In order to identify the young gentle
man appearing in so many of those photographs, I have included for comparison a photograph of Louis M. MacDermot sitting in his boat, the "Petrel". (That photo was found in Al Smith's collection of MacDermot material.)

Is the young man in the "old" photos the same as that in the Petrel image?
Who is the young lady standing close to the gentleman in the first figure?
Are Louis's siblings shown in the photo of two young ladies and the young man?
Can you identify any of the scenes in the other photos?

The box containing these negatives was given many years ago to Randy Jones by Charlie Hoyle, at whose home Louis MacDermot and his wife lived in their last years. Two years ago, Chris Taylor and Randy located a photographic restoration expert to process the negatives. Randy Vaughn-Dotta of Fresno State University and Drew Tudman, a student, carefully and gingerly straightened out each negative, digitally scanned it, and inverted the file into a positive image. Many thanks to them for their laborious but successful restoration. Although the collection does not contribute any insight into MacDermot's Overfair Railway, nevertheless the photos seem to represent an excellent record of an upper class family's "Grand Tour" of a century ago.

Reminder:

Membership for Swanton Pacific is being accepted. See attached membership form.
Louis M. MacDermont and Friend, 007 MG 6394

Old LML negative, location?? 029 MG 6418

Louis M. MacDermont’s Siblings, 186 MG 6580

Old LML cityscape, location? 044 MG 6433

What is this? Inscription on gun barrel reads “C?? de 52 centimeters de calubres”, 014 MG 6401

Old LML water falls negative, location?? 084 MG 6474