ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

To cancel Cal Poly Day has been one of the most disappointing decisions I have had to make as director of SPRS. I felt that we could not take any risk and operate our steam engines over the Carnegie Bridge until the stabilizing work was completed. With so many government and regulatory agencies involved in California streams, it becomes very difficult to get them all on the same plan at the same time. I do not know what I would have done without the work and insight that Brian Dietterick has shown. The number and volume of emails that have been exchanged this year on the bridge is overpowering. My sincere thanks goes out to Brian, the students, and the staff of the Swanton Pacific Ranch for their herculean effort on our behalf. Let’s all keep our fingers crossed for a positive result.

The one positive item is that we have been able to concentrate and make much progress on a small number of projects. The Orchard Supply Caboose has a completely new interior. We only have a little finish work left to do before procuring some furniture to finish off the caboose.

The forklift is almost ready to make a test run and then final assembly in the Car Barn. Under Randy’s leadership, the 1913 tender had most of its bottom removed in order to get it ready for a new water tank.

The motor car was able to haul the tractor and flail mower to the end of track where Pete mowed the weeds in and around the daffodil field.

In addition, gophers have been trapped, plants weeded, and training on how to re-rail a car have all successfully been accomplished. The positive team work of our Swanton volunteers is always appreciated and helps make our organization so rewarding for all to enjoy. Come join in the fun at the next work weekend.

Down Behind the Railway

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

My Fellow Swantoons:

Fall has fallen once again and that means we have our first General Meeting of the year noon on Saturday, October 8th with a Special Order of Business for the nomination of officers.

As this is an odd year, we will elect the First and Third Vice-presidents, as well as the Treasurer in November at our General Meeting.
The incumbents are all in the running, but don’t let that deter you from throwing your hat in the ring.

Unfortunately there is not much happening on the restoration of the bridge revetment which leaves us at loose ends. Some pesky little facility work is being accomplished, e.g.: the forklift is finally getting back together, the OSH caboose restoration is near completion, and the 1913’s tender is open and nearly ready for a water tank insert.

All for now, keep your spirits up and come on over.

Fitz

NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTER
George Pepper  Santa Cruz, CA

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY
Mary Ann Carnegie

Oct. 8/9 Work Weekend
Nov. 12/13 Work Weekend

Reminder to all: we are now back to only one work weekend/month—the second Sat. followed by its Sunday. We should also have access to the Redhouse for most of work weekends, but as ALWAYS, please confirm if you need overnight facilities so that we can confirm with all entities involved with facility usage.

Saturday night dinners remain open to all chefs wanting to exhibit their culinary skills. Hungry and appreciative tasters are always available to give their positive ratings of one’s cooking efforts.

A New Year’s theme is still being sought, so put your thinking caps on and submit suggestions. A prize just might be awarded for the best, the most original, unusual, humm, whatever???

With or without train rides being offered we continue to have many guests visit the facilities. Many thanks goes to all of you that host and encourage them to come back and share in all our fun. Talk Swanton up and bring a friend or two to our work weekends. What better time is there than now to have them get to know all about the facilities, us, and various projects they may wish to take on? Bring ‘em on down, over or around to Swanton for the good times. See ya’ll soon.

Plasma arc being used to remove the bottom of the tender for the 1913

One of our Christmas trees before the pruning crew worked it over

Reminder:
Membership for Swanton Pacific is being accepted.
See attached membership form.
THE “LITTLE PUFFER” STEAM ENGINE and L. M. MACDERMOT

The attached photographs are old snapshots of the Little Puffer steam engine. This locomotive is still operating today at the San Francisco Zoo. It is a Cagney 4-4-0, 22-inch gauge locomotive built between 1904 and 1907. About 1923, it was acquired by three enterprising gentlemen in San Francisco, who asked Louis M. MacDermot to help them overhaul and rebuild the locomotive. MacDermot was the partner “with the skill and knowledge” of locomotives. In 1925, after some intriguing mishaps, it started operations at the Fleishhacker Zoo, now known as the San Francisco Zoo.

“Little Puffer” 4-4-0 Cagney Engine at the Fleishhaker (San Francisco) Zoo about 1925-1940 from the Al Smith Collection

The Little Puffer then ran from 1925 until 1978, when it was laid up in an elephant house while the Zoo reorganized the grounds. About 1997, a group from the Golden Gate Railroad Museum (GGRM) completely overhauled the engine. It resumed service on Aug. 25, 1998 at the S. F. Zoo where it has been operating daily, as weather permits.
Cagney 4-4-0 No. 1925 at the “Herbert Fleishhacker Playfield/Miniature Railroad” (S.F. Zoo)

Don Micheletti of the GGRM restoration crew wrote a fascinating article on the Little Puffer's history and many overhauls for the November/December issue of *Live Steam*. The SPRR newsletter of December 2000 reprinted excerpts from the Micheletti article, especially those parts pertaining to MacDermot's involvement in the 1925 restoration. The SPRR article did not have any photos. A few years later, Chris Taylor, while he was cataloging the hundreds of snapshots in Al Smith's collection, discovered an envelope marked "Fleishhacker Zoo Rwy/Negatives and Other Little Engines". The envelope contains about two dozen negatives and eight B&W positives. A few of them have inscriptions on their back sides; those inscriptions have been reproduced in script font on two of the attached photos. Only two of the prints are dated on the back; those two were processed on May 29, 1941. The other prints appear to be from the 1930's, or even the late 1920's, because of their small size, 2-1/2 in. by 4-1/4 in., which was popular in those years. Most of the prints are of the Little Puffer. A few are unidentified "other engines". Presumably, and I repeat "presumably", these negatives and prints came from MacDermot to Billy Jones and Charlie Hoyle and then to Al Smith. That supposition seems reasonable in light of the involvement of Jones and Hoyle with MacDermot in his last four years. However, we have not yet been able to verify such an assumption.

Additional references:
3. Shaw, Frederic; *Little Railways of the World*; Chapter XV, The Brothers Cagney; Chapter XVI, Bay Area Steam Bantams/Fleishhacker Zoo Railroad.