

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 301

Cal Poly

June, July, 2015

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

Ed Carnegie:

Hi all, this year's summer camp was a great success. My many thanks goes out to ALL that participated in many different ways. The meals were outstanding, and true to Swanton style in that I know of no one that went away hungry. We seemed to have a good balance between work, training and plain ol' fun. It was topped off with a well-attended Open House, and even by a few donned in vintage attire for our locomotives 100-year celebration! I'm always amazed, and most appreciative by all that our volunteers do and give to SPRR. Other short &/or detailed articles and photographs [submitted by our volunteers] featuring other aspects of the week long activities follow.

#### Activities during the week:

The track crew, under the leadership of Pete McFall, replaced ties and rail, placed underlayment down to control weed growth and help stop soil fines from coming in contact with the ties. Obviously the longer the ties stay dry and free of debris, the longer they last. An unexpected observation made upon removing some of the older redwood ties was that there was a greater amount of rail corrosion taking place where the rail came in contact with the tie. We certainly won't be using any more redwood ties in the future and will be replacing them when necessary. With the assistance of many volunteers helping with the measuring, cutting, fitting, and welding a new switch frog was also completed. Additional wood working took place on both the Overfair car, as well as some designing on the roof of the Keystone car. The dry erase boards got refurbished, as did the r2d2, minion deep-well pump. After many hours of work the Massey backhoe got underway and was able to be moved out of the shop!

A toping success was the certification of many.

### **Down Behind the Railway**

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

Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick

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#### My Fellow Swantoons:

Swanton Summer Camp [aka Swanton Exercise and Fitness Camp] was the first week of August the following projects were tackled, but still may need more work.

Pete and crew, to stay in shape, did lots of track work towards the wye. When Pete wears his Signalman's hat, assistance is needed to drive conduit under the rail to connect the north and south facing signals.

The original Overfair car still needs some TLC- i.e., replace end sill, buffers, decking, patch dings, dents, some paneling, do painting, and other miscellaneous cosmetic items- see Randy, Geoff, Matt, or me.

The Handi car: drill mounting holes in the counterweight, install the counterweight, modify the seating, clean and paint – see Geoff or me.

Build a tree nursery fence - see Robert.

There are several more little projects posted in the machine shop, stuff that can be done in a day, and I have sorting of fasteners and materials to be done in the car shop. Perhaps next work weekend.

We had 3-specific days of conductor /engineer training with several getting certified. Additional experience was gained as equipment was moved around to complete various tasks.

The end of the week was topped with a successful Open House and the centennial celebration of the Overfair Railway locomotives. Just like having at your home, the day before was spent cleaning, and the Sunday following concluded with cleaning.

Come on over, we'll have fun.

Fitz

## In the Roundhouse With Randy Jones

Since the last newsletter, your shop forces have been spending a lot of time in support of equipment maintenance and the Track Department. The loader-backhoe suffered a failure that included burned out wiring. Close examination revealed many other problems that needed to be addressed, and this has absorbed most of Geoff and Fitz's available time since March. Prior to that, Fitz was continuing work on the 1913's tender.

The Track Department began replacement of old ties in the curves at Windy Point and Julio (the Christmas Tree spur). The shop got involved



Carpet and ties in place at windy point

correcting poorly-curved rails, a process that has absorbed many more hours than we would like, but the results have been well worth it so far. The rail bender needed work, and the machine shop turned a new center roller as part of that. A new lift-out-span (generally referred to as a "culvert") has been built for the realigned curve at Julio, to provide much smoother operation for the locomotives.



Track crew placing underlayment at Julio



Milling the points of a frog

On the 502, a routine throttle cable adjustment led to a test run. That led to us noticing a new/different/louder noise coming from the gear train from the main gear case to the trucks. (On the RR, you just have to be prepared to find unexpected problems during inspections. It's not fun, but it is the railroad life.) The Machine Shop door re-build came in very handy, as we were able to move the portable gantry crane inside the shop and lift the 502 inside. Dis-assembly of the front truck gear case revealed no apparent cause for the noise, except for some gear wear we thought was more than we should expect. However, close examination of the slack or "play" in the drive train showed that the wheels on the second axle are slightly smaller than those on the first and third axles. This puts the entire gear train under a strain while rolling down the track, and keeps the gears on the two axles under constant pressure. Further tests to isolate this action showed that this is the source of at least part of the offending noise. Brendon Hilton has volunteered to machine new wheel tires when we can organize a program for that. For now, we are going to live with it while we concentrate on the 1913.

The Al Smith Day run went well, with the only exception being the temporary failure of the 1914's mechanical lubricator to pump steam cylinder oil into the valves and cylinders. During lunch, Brendon, Dennis and some helpers removed the lubricator, cleaned it out thoroughly, serviced the check valves, and made it operate properly again. I realize I usually (always?) forget to mention Marty Campbell's contributions preparing the locomotive for the runs. He gets the boiler sealed ready for water, cleans and lubricates the loco, loads it with hot water, and several other tasks that are all necessary to fire a steam engine. Then he fires it up, usually teaching someone as he goes, and "lights it off" early on run day to be ready on time. Several of our firemen, Dennis Johnson in particular, and some of our firemen-in-training, often help out.

On a personal note, I always try to remember those volunteers who help out and really make our events, and just the RR itself, possible. I fear that my usual apology for leaving someone out

may be starting to seem like a rote excuse. Some years ago, I went through a period of undiscovered and thus untreated sleep apnea. It damaged my short-term memory, and while it has improved a lot, I'll never get all of the function back. I tell myself I should make notes to acknowledge those who contribute, and then forget to make the notes. I'm aware we all get older, and these things just happen, but I'm sharing this with you in the hope that you all know there are many unacknowledged volunteers who keep the SPRR alive, and I am genuinely grateful for your time and energy and encouragement.

Yours in "training", Randy Jones

**NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTERS**

Mark Bergmann	San Jose, CA
Ronald Brandon	San Jose, CA
David Campen	Palo Alto CA
Tom Heaton	San Mateo, CA
Gloria Keller	Santa Rosa, CA
Chris Lubas	Fremont, 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.

**Other Summer Camp Happenings**  
Rhoda Fry

**Boiler tube cleaning**

During the summer camp work-week, Scott and Chip cleaned the 100 or so boiler tubes of the #1914. Tube cleaning removes soot and ash from the tubes, which improves draft for the fire. They used a gun-cleaning brush connected to a long pole attached to a drill and got very dirty!



Scott and chip after the boiler cleaning

For our August 8 Open House, we encouraged

guests to wear period clothing to celebrate the 1915 San Francisco Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE). One gentleman wore original items from the PPIE.



Guests Wearing Period clothing to our Locomotive's Centennial

The PPIE100 organization helped to promote this "sold out" free event, which attracted visitors who had never heard of the railroad before. In attendance were representatives from the California Historical Society, San Francisco History Association, San Francisco Victorian Alliance, and Carolands. People came from nearby such as Bonny Doon, Santa Cruz, Saratoga, San Jose, San Carlos, and from further away such as San Francisco, Marin County, and Santa Rosa. The event allowed our volunteers to practice railroad operations, provide shop tours, and encourage membership. While the highlight was the #1914 steam locomotive's centennial, the #502 diesel locomotive that was concurrently in use for training provided interest as well.

**Track Work**  
With Pete McFall

**Track:** a pair of metal bars that a train, trolley, or subway car rides along

So, now that we know what we are talking about, and have been working on—get prepared as we have just ordered 700 more pounds, or 4,440 more spikes to be driven into our tracks!! So be sure to come down, over, or up to help us get it spiked!

**UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY**

Mary Ann Carnegie



2015 -Centennial Celebration of Panama Pacific International Exposition—The Overfair locomotives [aka Swanton Pacific RR] were there, and are now here!

+  
 Upcoming events at Swanton, mark your calendars:  
 Aug. 22/23 Work weekend-Memorial Day  
 Sept. 12/13 Work Weekend  
 Sept. 26 Prepping for Cal Poly Day  
 Sept. 27 Cal Poly Run Day  
 Oct. 10/11 Work Weekend  
 Oct. potential guests on site??  
 Nov. 14/15 Work Weekend  
 Dec. 12/13 Work Weekend  
 Dec. 30/31 New Year's

What a most successful Summer Camp week of "getting it done"! Many hands made the tasks light and to see anywhere from 15-35 volunteers each day participating, contributing and sharing in all the fun times, and then to top it all off with getting several of our volunteers certified in train operations breathed new life into all . . . the engines, the organization, and even seemed to make some of our volunteers' feet not touch the ground. Through it all, everything stayed on track! It was also a very special treat to see our father/son team operate as fireman/engineer. The Open House brought our volunteers from as far away as CT, Oregon, and all over and around the state of CA. We also attracted many interested guests, who we hope gained much insight and interest about our organization, from the immense enthusiasm shared with them from our volunteers on the Open House Run Day.

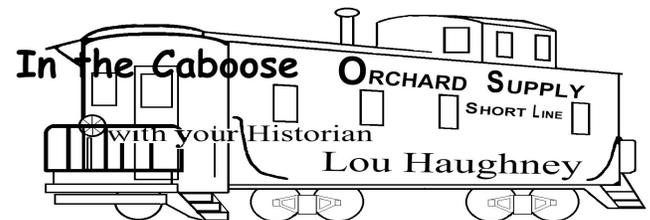


Dave & Alex a farther and son team on the 1912

Next month—we will be hosting our annual Cal Poly Run Day Event. Invites have gone out both by snail and email. Please share your invite— [included in this newsletter] with others so as to share this special place, its history, along with what you as volunteers do here to make it all happen. It is our hope to possibly stir the interests of our guests to help in continuing the life and history of the Swanton Pacific Railroad by becoming a part of the organization. But between now and then we will all have lots of prep work to do to get ready for our potential 500 guests. Remember, you too will need to RSVP for the event. Redhouse facilities will be available for us in September.

In October we return to our official once a month work weekends. With El Nino perhaps coming, most projects will then Sdivert to being indoor or raingear projects. So start to prepare.

The delicious, well-planned meals during Summer Camp were certainly appreciated and enjoyed by all. As was everyone's team work in setting up, sharing, and with the cleanup chores throughout the week. If you missed out on the experience this year, be sure to mark your calendar for next. You will enjoy!



### RIDING THE SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD A SHORT HISTORY

**Please remain seated anytime the train is in motion**

*Keep your hands and feet inside the cars.  
Thank you*

The name SWANTON PACIFIC may not invoke great memories for anyone who is familiar with such railroad names as the Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Santa Fe etc., however, this one-third sized 19 inch gauge railroad has within itself a lengthy historical background.

The Swanton Pacific is located on the old right-of-way of the OCEAN SHORE RAILROAD that once ran from Santa Cruz to Swanton with the hope of connecting to the road's northern terminus—San Francisco. The northern portion of the Ocean Shore was built from San Francisco south to Tunitas which is south of Half Moon Bay. The road was incorporated in 1905 with trains running south from Twelfth and Mission in San Francisco and north from Santa Cruz. The OCR was never completed and was out of business by 1921.

The Swanton Pacific is located at the site of Swanton and runs westward toward a place called Folger where a switch shunted logging traffic up "Little Creek" to a lumber camp which became part of the San Vincente Lumber Company. Even today one can find railroad ties in the roadway on the hillside.

The community of Swanton is located sixty-four miles south of San Francisco and sixteen miles north of Santa Cruz. A small population lived there, most of whom worked for the railroad and the

lumber company. The main attraction was the Swanton Inn and the nearness of the Pacific Ocean.

The SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD consists mainly of another piece of California history, that being the locomotives built for the Pan-American International Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco which celebrated the opening of the Panama Canal and trade with the orient. The Palace of Fine Arts is the only existing structure still standing from those times but its railroad equipment lives on.



Overfair locomotive 1913 in San Francisco 1915

A young mechanical engineer from Oakland set about to build a railroad to serve the exposition. Louis MacDermot built the OVERFAIR RAILWAY. He studied the exploits of another engineer J.J. Coit from the Los Angeles area who built a steam train for the East Lake Park Railway in 1903 and two more for the Venice Railway (Playa del Rey Railroad) in 1905. These were 18 inch gauge locomotives also built to one-third scale. One of those two engines, the Number 2, was purchased by the late Billy Jones of Los Gatos and has been in service on the Wildcat Railroad at Oak Meadow Park since 1970.

Louis MacDermot built four state-of-the-art steam locomotives for the OVERFAIR: Numbers "1912", "1913", "1914", and the "1915". Each weighed approximately 18,000 pounds and was built to handle large trains made up of the 60 passenger cars that Mac Dermot assembled in his shops in Oakland. He also built a heavy switch engine Number "1500" which he used in the construction of the OVERFAIR RAILWAY.

The OVERFAIR was beset with problems (mostly political) from its inception. When the exposition closed in November of 1915 MacDermot had realized no profit from his venture. He took his trains back to Oakland where he rarely had an opportunity to run them. He passed away in 1948 but not before he was befriended by Billy Jones who purchased the remains of the rolling stock and the locomotives from the MacDermot estate.

Billy Jones ran his Venice No. 2 at the corner of Daves and Winchester Avenues in Los Gatos from

1943 until his death in 1968. In the meantime the OVERFAIR engines slumbered away on the Jones' property. Prior to his death Jones sold the "1915" (the unfinished engine), the "1914" and the "1500" to a collector Quentin Jarvis of Los Angeles. Jones used some of the passenger cars from the OVERFAIR on his WILDCAT RAILROAD but had to reduce the 19 inch gauge wheels down to 18 inch gauge for his operation. After Billy's death the remaining Pacifics ("1912" and "1913") and other rolling stock were sold to Bob Maxfield of Calistoga.

Maxfield built his "Calistoga Railroad" next to the airport just outside of Calistoga and after a few years of less than successful operations Maxfield put his two locomotives and related equipment up for sale in 1977.

Al Smith, then President of the Orchard Supply Hardware stores and a volunteer locomotive engineer on the new Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad now located in the Los Gatos town park, purchased the Calistoga equipment with the turntable. In 1979, he moved it to his ranch at Swanton and began construction of the SWANTON PACIFIC. Smith later purchased a diesel locomotive and some extra cars from the Alabama Historama in Mobile. In the early 1980's after Quentin Jarvis died, Smith was the successful bidder on the remainder of the OVERFAIR equipment except for the "1500" which was purchased by Neil Vodden, a friend of both Smith and the late Billy Jones. He later sold the locomotive to the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad Corporation.

Today, Al Smith's SWANTON PACIFIC is alive and well on this historic right-of-way site. Three of the Pacifics "1912", "1913", and "1914" are operational and see service on weekends. Smith donated the "1915" to the California State Railway Museum at Sacramento where it sits as the primary display in the museum's lobby. Keeping the dream alive for non-profits such as the SANTA CLARA VALLEY RAILROAD ASSOCIATION the SWANTON PACIFIC provides an opportunity for all of us to ride and see the ultimate of the "BIG SCALE" live steam excursion train operations. One can believe that MacDermot and Billy Jones are alive in spirit as the trains roll on . . . .

THANK YOU MR. SMITH!

*Narrative by Michael F. Kotowski*

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