

Swanton-Pacific Railroad Society

February 1, 1994

The second month of 1994 is already upon us. We hope that the new year has started out to be a good one for you.

By now, most of you have heard that Al Smith passed away at his home, on December 18, 1993. He was another person that lost the battle to that dreaded disease, Cancer. He was 72. He had known of his condition for some months but didn't let on to very many people of his condition. I know all of you will agree that he will be truly missed. It seems so strange, to think that we won't be seeing him drive up in his pick-up anymore, or of him telling us one of his great stories. He always had a great story to tell, didn't he? His memory will live on, though. Before he passed away he stated in his will that he wanted his Swanton Ranch to go entirely to Cal Poly which included the train operation. So basically everything is as it was, just not with Al Smith. Al also mentioned that he would like a special piece of train equipment set up as a memorial. This will be a "train order board" placed at the end of the roundhouse next to the road. It has already been started and will be worked on at our February meeting. A dedication and a big celebration in memory of Al is being planned for later on in the year. Probably in April.

As of now, the ranch which includes the train, is being overseen by the Cal Poly Foundation. A budget has been proposed and if it is approved the Swanton Pacific Railroad Society will be well maintained. As the details unfold we will pass on the information to you. Currently there is a lot of speculation and rumors so we don't want to say anything until everything is finalized.

A lot of decisions will be made this coming year regarding this train and the society. Be thinking how you can become involved. We have a great foundation started and now we have to build upon that. We will have to start planning on what direction we, as a society, want to work towards. What are our goals and what has to be accomplished to achieve these goals? It will be important to keep informed and by attending the monthly meetings. Make sure you have your dues paid so you will continue to receive information.

The crane built at Cal Poly is finished!! A lot of time and effort went into completing this crane so it will be exciting to see it in operation. We plan on delivering it to Swanton at our meeting. In the mean time we plan on taking it to the Tulare Farm Equipment show on February 8-10. It will be set up along the North fence at a business called Nikkel Iron Works. Jack Nikkel is a long time friend of Cal Poly and we appreciate his generous donation of this space. So if you are at the show look us up. The next project at Cal Poly is to complete the BBQ (parlour) car. It should be finished in time for the warm summer BBQ weather.

Electrical power has been connected down to the meadow area as well to the metal building. So light poles should start being put up and turned on. Track still has to be maintained, and the north loop will always be there to work on. There is talk about some people staying over into Sunday and running the saw mill to make more ties. If you would like to stay over and help, the Red House is available. So there should be something for everyone to get involved in at our February meeting. Don't forget to bring your lunch and any snacks that you might want. This looks like it will be a good day for all that attend. We hope to see you Saturday, February 12, at 9:00 a.m. at the round house.

All Aboard !!