



SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 34

December 1995

Reminder

Our workdays for December are Wednesday evening, **December 6th.** at Cal Poly, starting @ 6:00 P. M. and at the Swanton Ranch, Saturday morning, **December 9th.** beginning @ 9:00A. M.

On Track

with your Director,
Ed. Carnegie

First of all I hope that each of you had a great Thanksgiving! Second—on to business— Don't forget to vote either via the ballot found in this newsletter or at the workday. Please send in your ballot, bring it to the December workday, or send it with someone. The ballots will be counted Saturday, **December 11.** During the November meeting at Swanton nominations for all offices were opened and closed with no change. A few candidates made speeches and some campaign promises. No minutes were taken, so no one will be held accountable.

The Carnegie-Stone Construction Company put in a full day Tuesday Nov. 21. With only the two us we drafted 3 eager young farm workers from the ranch and were able to pour 25 yards of concrete. Our thanks to the farm crew who came to our aid. We could not have done it without them. By the end of the day we had a 1200 square foot slab for the car barn expansion, a new step for Al's caboose, a

concrete ring for the bon-fire pit and a 2-yard block of concrete under the north end of the Scott bridge. We had all certainly worked up a great appetite for Thanksgiving on Thursday! Or at least we felt we could eat a little bit more with no worry of it going to the waist! A special thanks is also extended to Bob Nichols for his arranging to have the concrete and pumper arrive on time.

The December workday will be a good day for a Saturday to Sunday workout, if the weather isn't too bad. Elmer's track crew will have a very full day replacing the track on the Scott Creek Bridge, and getting the track ready for the New Year's Eve Celebration. For those that haven't spent New Year's Eve at Swanton come and ride the last train ride for 1995 and the first for 1996. All who attend have a great time. Hot mulled cider, zamores, and other goodies are donated by some. You too can bring something to share with all.

Marty Campbell has been working on the transfer box on the 502 and is hopeful to have it ready by the first of the year, that is if all of the parts can be obtained. Many of you may have noticed too that Marty had been busy making arrangements to have Swanton Pacific RR pins designed and ready for purchase. They are circular pins (about 3/4" in diameter) and sell for \$5.00/each. A great stocking stuffer!

Another project on the agenda is getting the station picnic area ready for the summer so that green grass in the meadow could be enjoyed all year long. We are looking at laying

out an automatic sprinkler system to cover the majority of the meadow area. If you would like to work on this project let me know. We are also looking at the permanent placement of lights, picnic eating tables and benches. They are roughly laid out, so be sure to look the meadow area over and provide input to us either pro or con.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you for your help and assistance throughout 1995. We have been very productive with all of the projects and improvements in the Swanton Railroad. This would not have been possible without your many contributions in time, resources, energy and sore muscles. We look forward to next year being just as successful, and maybe even better! I hope that all of you have a very nice holiday season and that you will be able to join in with us at "riding-in" the New Year at Swanton!

In the Caboose

A short section of the Swanton Pacific Railroad time-line is continued from the last newsletter for your information and/or comments.

- Jan. 5 1969 Article in Oakland Tribune about pending sale of Overfair railway equipment.
- Feb.-Mar 69 Robt. Maxfield, a "Piedmont (Oakland) real estate appraiser", bought #1912 & #1913 and three passenger cars after he saw the Oakland Tribune article
- Nov. 1969 Maxfield moved engines and cars to Oakland from Billy Jones Ranch.
- 1970-75 Engines overhauled in Oakland, according to 1974 photos of Maxfield and Steven Rives.
- 1975 Starts operation of #1913 as "Calistoga Steam Railroad" by Maxfield next to the Calistoga

- 1977 Airport, Napa County.
"After a few years of less than successful operation, Maxfield put his equipment up for sale.
- 1978 "Al Smith...purchased the Calistoga equipment with the turntable".
- 1979 Al Smith starts construction of the Swanton Pacific Railroad.
- Mar 12, 1983 Auction of the estate of Quentin Jervis by the Public Administrator of Los Angeles County.
Al Smith bought Overfair engines #1914 and #1915 for \$5,500 and \$2,500 respectively. Neil Vodden paid \$8,500 for the switcher #1500, which he later sold to the Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad Corporation.
- ??? Al Smith donated the unfinished #1915 to the California State Railway Museum at Sacramento.
- 1991 Engine #1915 put on display in the CSRM's Lobby.
- Dec. 18, 1993 Death of Al Smith
- 1994 Ownership of Swanton Pacific Ranch and Railroad passes to Cal Poly Foundation.
- Dec. 1994 Al Smith's Orchard Supply caboose moved from Los Gatos to Swanton Pacific Ranch.
- Mar. 1995 Engine #1500 bought by SPRS from the Wildcat Railroad and moved to the Swanton Pacific Ranch.

New Years Eve

The annual New Years Eve Midnight run will be happening again. Remember that this is for the entire family and the train will be running, so no alcohol will be served but there will be some fantastic hot apple cider and a big warm fire. Hope to see you there.

Overfair Railway Calendar

by Lou Haughney

A mint, original copy of the 1954 Railroadians' Commemorative Calendar, "Overfair Railway" has been presented for framing and display to the Swanton Pacific Railroad Society by Stephen E. Drew, Senior Curator, California State Railroad Museum (CSRM). This is an item for which we have been searching for the fast few years since we first saw a battered, folded copy of it in the local history room of the San Francisco Public Library. Printed in blue and brick red on a piece of white card stock, about 15 inches by 20 inches, are three photos of MacDermot and his engines, a brief history of the Overfair Railway, technical specifications of the Pacific locomotives, and a map of the rail route around the Exposition's grounds. Small sheets each with a four months' calendar are attached to the bottom.

In response to our inquiry about obtaining copies for individual members, we were told that the calendar is not for sale at the Museums bookstore and shop. They were given about 200 copies of the calendar for promotional and fund-raising purposes. The CSRM has offered to transfer 50 copies to the SPRS in return for an appropriate donation to the CSRM.

The calendar will be shown at the December 9th workday. Let us know if you would be interested in buying a copy, and how much you would be willing to pay. Whether or not we will take up the CSRM's suggestion will depend upon your responses.

History Committee

by Lou Haughney

Chapters on the MacDermot/Overfair Railway and the Maxfield/Calistoga Steam Railroad eras are now being prepared in draft form. Enough material about the early MacDermot years has been collected to allow

commencement of the writing even though many unanswered questions still remain. Our thanks to Bob Maxfield for his lending many of his files and photos when he visited Swanton in September.

We also appreciate also the help of several SPRS members who have found and passed on newspaper clippings, photos, and documents that have been very informative or have led to other sources of information. Display boards and frames showing some of these items have been prepared and set up on "run days" in the past few months.

We will soon begin studying more thoroughly the periods covering MacDermot's last years, his moving with his equipment to Billy Jones' home, and then Al Smith's building the Swanton Pacific Railroad. The CSRM's Library has a good file of material on the Jervis ownership of the 1500, 1914, and 1915 engines; that file must be examined more thoroughly.

We will appreciate material and suggestions of information that you may have or find. Also, anyone who would like to assist in the research and the writing will be most welcome. Contact Lou Haughney at (415) 592-2517

Christmas Gifts

As Christmas approaches I'm sure you are thinking of gifts. How about a membership in the Swanton Pacific Railroad Society. Membership will be starting in January so why not tell that special friend to make a contribution in your name. Membership will be just \$25.00 for one year.

Don't forget that we still have our popular t-shirts and hats and now our soon to be a collectors item, the railroad pins. All items will be at our December meeting as well as the New Years run.

Status of Cabooses

By Lou Haughney

The interior of the Orchard Supply Hardware caboose is in good condition; it needs only a normal housecleaning. Then, some furniture will be obtained so that it can serve as a lounge or small meeting room and office space for SPRS members only. Also, as a remembrance of Al Smith, many of his collection of railroad photographs and other memorabilia will be displayed on the inside walls. The exterior, however, desperately needs sanding and repainting; and the walkways on the top are rotting and must be replaced.

The Santa Fe 999297 caboose also must be sanded and painted, both inside and outside. Once the interior has refinished, then the original chairs and benches, which are now stored in the trailer, can be reinstalled. The toilets now in the caboose will remain there until permanent restroom facilities are provided in the meadow and station area.

Hopefully in the coming year, a few work days can be designated for refurbishment of the cabooses. Any and all suggestions and most of all, willing hands will be welcome. Please contact Lou Haughney if you can help in any way with these cabooses.

Movies

As a Christmas present to all SPRS members and friends, Randy Jones has offered to show movies of the Swanton Railroad that he has taken in past years. These movies will be shown in the Red House, Saturday evening, after our workday, in December. Randy states that he has enough movies to show clear into the late hours so plan on staying over that night if you can. These movies are from the days when the railroad was just starting and includes when the tracks were washed out in the big storms.

In Memory

After a lengthy illness, the father of Mary Ann Carnegie, passed away on Nov. 2, 1995. The Swanton Pacific Railroad Society sent some flowers to the service and we received this thank-you.

"The floral arraignment was beautiful and we do appreciate very much the thoughtfulness of the Railroad Society. Our family is blessed with so many compassionate friends and we do Thank You again".

We also want you to remember Al Smith. It was two years ago this month that he passed away. If it were not for his visions, this whole railroad would not be what it is today. It is special that this piece of history can be enjoyed by so many people from all over the world. For the generous donations, and to all of the hard work he put into this railroad, we say ... "Hail to the Chief"!

1500

The following letter was received regarding the 1500:

Ken Fischer, Geoff Tobin, & Andrew Martin:

Certainly no configuration will satisfy everyone and any configuration is a compromise. The primary issue that should not be compromised is safety. Once safety has been addressed, we should then strive to rebuild this locomotive as "1500" as possible.

1. Coal vs. oil. While it would be the most authentic, the cinders pose a serious threat. Oil significantly lessens that risk, and is much more practical.
2. Pilot Truck. It is true that we do not necessarily need the 1500 to be another road

locomotive. Not having the experience in this area, I pose this question: Can the 1500 safely and routinely travel the length of our truck without special speed restriction? We cannot afford a serious derailment.

3. Saddle Tanks. The fundamental character of the 1500 depends on the saddle tanks. It would not be the 1500 without them. Lack of water capacity is, however, a serious safety issue. A tank gauge would be mandatory. A quick disconnect tank car, which could be disguised, would allow for autonomous running, or the capacity of a tender, without compromising the historical configuration. A tank car could also hold enough fuel and water for extended operations, such as track maintenance and construction.

4. The Cab. This is another issue of the fundamental character of the locomotive. It should only be changed with all of the other options exhausted and a strong consensus from the membership. Do our safety rules allow a locomotive to be run with only one operator? Is there enough fuel capacity in the bunker?

Can we find a way to fit two people in the cab? Perhaps we should mount the cab on the chassis, mock up the boiler and see how we really feel while sitting inside. How many people have actually sat in the cab? There are many questions that must be answered before we decide on a plan of action for this issue.

If we are to rebuild the 1500, then it should still be the 1500 when it is complete. Making changes, sometimes significant changes, is historically correct. Our own Pacific's are no exception. Of course the ultimate change in almost every steam locomotive happened at the hands of a cutting torch. No one is suggesting that modification. We have both an opportunity and an obligation to preserve as much history as possible, while restoring an operational and safe 1500.

Membership

Annual dues to the society is \$25.00 per person. Dues are collected during the first of each year. Any correspondence to this newsletter or change of address and/or phone number should be sent to:

Swanton Pacific Railroad Society
Agricultural Engineering Department
Cal Poly State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

(805) 756-2378
(805) 756-2626 FAX

Workdays are held at the Swanton Pacific Ranch near Davenport, CA., the second Saturday of the month and the Wednesday evening, prior to that Saturday at the Agricultural Engineering Department, Cal Poly State University. Anyone and everyone is welcome at these workdays.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

Since this is the last letter of 1995, we would all like to wish you HAPPY HOLIDAYS, and hope 1996 will be a prosperous new year.
