

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 47

Jan. 1997

All Aboard !!

Our workdays for January are Wednesday evening, **January 8th.** at Cal Poly, starting @ 6:00 P. M. and at the Swanton Ranch, Saturday morning, **January 11th** starting @ 9:00 A. M.

On Track

with your Director,
Ed Carnegie

Nineteen ninety-seven has arrived (Happy New Year!), and SPRR started the new year in the rain, I guess you could say we have been officially blessed with some kind of water. December sure was a wet one, and January isn't falling too far behind. Scott Creek is running quite full and the station meadow is becoming a wetland. The new year's eve celebration went off in the rain, and was fairly well attended. The first run was about 4:30PM and then the 1912 was put back in the roundhouse. The train crew then retired up to Al's house for a fabulous potluck. Martha, Francis, Vera, Carol, Wendy and Mary Ann concentrated on the feast. Boy did we eat as we had at least 5 crockpots of **different** dishes along with many other dishes. The annual bonfire was started about 8:30pm with wet wood and 5 gallons of diesel fuel. After about 30 minutes the fire finally ignited and lasted until well after **midnight**, even through the buckets of rain. Bud McCrary, one of his grand-daughters, Andy McClean and I took the motor car and a flat car north into the pasture and cut up a downed tree for more fuel. The first two runs of the evening had very little rain, but that can't be said about the last two runs. Some where around 60 to 70 stout hearted train enthusiasts showed up and stayed in the rain, all to celebrate and bring in the new year. Some even ventured in the rain to roast marshmallows for zamores-0-over a chemically enhanced fire full of various colors. A special thank you is also given to Ken McCrary who provided hot mulled apple cider all evening long—it was "warmly" appreciated.

Randy Jones mounted a full scale four chime whistle on the 1912, which echoed throughout the valley during the evening. To add to the noise a friend of Marty's brought an official Amtrack whistle which was driven by the motor car, and the 502 was also brought down to the station for the countdown to midnight—who needs New York Times Sq. when we have our own Swanton Pacific's College Station Square. Even with all the rain, those of us who attended the run had a good time. So, if you missed out on this event this year, mark your calendar for next years. Same time, same date—Dec. 31.

I have received no input from you, our members, about additional work week ends. Please let me or any officer know what you think—either pro/con. If for it, then should it be every month? The first and second weekends, the second and third, or the second and fourth? Give us your input.

Reminder too, dues for the new year are due and payable. We hope that you will pay these by the workday in February so that you can be included in the new directory. We have the binders in stock now and will be distributing the new membership directories for each paid member in 1997. So pay your dues and be included this next year.

Mark your calendars for the new year with the second Saturday of every month being the scheduled workdays for Swanton. We know how busy everyone can easily become and how weekends get "occupied" quite rapidly but where else can you and your family spend an enjoyable day, or two, with great people, have fun, develop friendships, besides being able to work on trains? This year we are hoping to maybe have more overnights, other outings, along with bbq's &/or potlucks for everyone. These will be especially nice to do when the days get longer and the weather dries out a little bit more.

Items that will be coming up for the January workday are as follows:

- Track crew will continue to work on replacing ties.

- Car Barn—paint new doors and install electrical outlets and lights.
- Roundhouse crew will continue plans and work on the 502 and the 1913

I, along with the newly elected officers, wish you all a happy new year and we look forward to a very productive year at Swanton—complete old projects, start new ones, and continue to have our bonds of friendship grow stronger.

Behind the Throttle

with your President,
Bill McNab

Congratulations and best wishes to the new officers in 1997. The year has come to an end. We accomplished a lot. Some of what was planned last January did not happen, which leaves me sad that it just didn't get done. Perhaps the new officers will put it in their plans for 1997.

I wanted to get a hand signal and motor car training program set in motion so we can broaden our groups versatility. Also to start training for the diesel engine and eventually steam engine operators.

We did get an outing together with a group hike to Big Creek Falls and maybe in 1997 a trip to Niles Canyon RR or some where else.. The membership roster didn't get out but the Director has made mention of it materializing in 97.

All of us worked hard to increase participation in work days and barbecue train run events. We saw a few more families at work days. **Hopefully everyone will carry participation and some family oriented work days forward. The more participation, the more we accomplish and the easier the work is.** As Ed Carnegie says, "It can also be fun".

As we go forward - be proud of the work that has been accomplished, the projects you participated in, the passing to others the skills that you have learned and how that as a group we are working on a long term project that will be carried on and enjoyed by many. Always remember that communication and consensus move the projects forward and each individuals ideas and concerns need to be hear.

As your President for 1996, I thank you and wish all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

In the Caboose

with your Historian,
Lou Haughney

THE MacDermot ERA: 1912-1913:

As told in last month's newsletter, the CRSM's list of MacDermot's drawings indicate a wide range of mechanical design and interests in the years 1909-1911. Only two in that period refer to locomotives. Drawing B7, dated Dec. 29, 1910, is for a "Locomotive Boiler", 19-1/2 " O.D., with 74 tubes 4'-10" long. Drawing C20, dated Oct. 12, 1911, shows a "cylinder for 15 inch gauge locomotive L.N.W. type".

The next railroad drawing, C30, dated May 12, 1912, may indicate that MacDermot was becoming more interested in railroads. This drawing, "Standard Locomotives", shows two "14-1/2 Gauge Locomotives". The top locomotive on the drawing is a 4-6-2 Pacific type, numbered 4001; its overall length is 12' 2"; its height is 3' 8". The bottom locomotive, numbered 2001, is a 4-4-2 Atlantic type; its length is 10' 9"; height, 3' 8". The tenders are 6' 9" long and 33" high; they carry the inscription on their sides "Miniature Railroad". The inscription "Built by L. M. MacDermot, Oakland Cal." is written on the sides of the boilers. Another drawing, D46, dated May 20, 1912, seems to be a companion to C30; D46 is entitled "14-1/2 Gauge Standard Car". We do not have a copy of that latter drawing.

When MacDermot started his design and machine shop in 1909 or 1910, planning for an international exposition in San Francisco was already underway. **Its theme was to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal in 1913.** San Francisco wanted to be the center for the anticipated increase in commerce, finance, and trade with the Far East that would be stimulated by the availability of the Canal. On July 11, 1911, the directors of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition Company issued the report of its Site Committee. Their recommendation for the exposition's location was that it be spread out over three sections of San Francisco that stretched along the bay and the ocean shores from Van Ness Avenue to the east edge of the Presidio, then along the northwest corner of the City from the west side of the Presidio to the northwestern corner of Golden Gate Park, and then the far western end of the Park. Because such an

extensive layout would span eight to nine miles, the Committee recommended an "intermural railroad" to connect the sites. A proposed route would avoid "all heavy grades" and would not require any cuts or fills.

The committee's report was received with much flowery praise. The *San Francisco Examiner* in a special section of its July 11, 1911 edition states exuberantly:

"Set the joy bells ringing for we have reached the first stage on our four years' journey, and the road now stretches straight before us. The all important problem of a suitable site for our international exposition to be held here in 1915 has been solved. The decision has been made and announced, and all San Francisco rejoices thereat."

Well, this grandiose plan was later reduced in area, probably as a result of trying to solve the complex problems of financing, sufficient tenants and exhibitors, constructions schedules, etc. Only the first section was developed; namely, that stretching east to west from Van Ness Avenue to the Presidio and bounded by Lombard street on the south to the bay shore on the north.

MacDermot's interest in the Exposition now seemed to have been attracted if we judge by the listing of his drawings. On Feb. 26, 1913, a drawing was issued for a "Transportation Car" (C26); and, on April 26, 1913, for a "Proposed Intermural Railroad" (C31). The first is a side view of a roofless passenger car with the inscriptions "California" and "Panama Pacific" on the side. The car has two six-wheel trucks: its gauge is not given. It is interesting to note that, in the second drawing, MacDermot uses its title the words "intermural railroad", the same phrase used in the Exposition's Site Committee's report. The SPRS does not have a copy of this drawing.

These two drawings mark a turning point in MacDermot's interests. After April 1913, all the drawings listed in the CRSM's inventory pertain to railroad engines and cars. It appears that, in the second quarter of 1913, MacDermot must have been awarded the concession for what became the Overfair Railroad.

An insight as to why MacDermot choose a "miniature" railroad scale may be gained from this statement by the English railroad historian, O. S. Nock, in his book *Railways in the Years of Pre-Eminence, 1905-1919*.

"While main-line locomotives were getting ever larger, and some picturesque smaller units were

being introduced for railways operating on substandard gauges in many parts of the world, the art of railway modeling was born. In its earliest days this development was almost entirely with steam locomotives, in many cases with wealthy patrons who could afford to have miniature locomotives running lengthy tracks in large gardens. The cult spread to having still more extensive systems for conveyance of materials on large country estates. A locomotive enthusiast landowner would take immense pleasure from having the logging 'traffic' operated by an exquisite scale model of a Great Northern 'Atlantic' or a London and North Western 'Presursor',The development of miniature steam locomotives reached its zenith in the years before the First World War in the passenger-carrying lines erected at various international exhibitions, and the famous model engineering firm of Bassett-Lowke Ltd. built some remarkably successful locomotives operating on the gauge of 1 ft. 3 in." (Emphasis added.)

I have heard oral reports that the MacDermot family traveled often in Great Britain and continental Europe and that Louis was educated in England. So, he may well have received the idea for his "proposed intermural railroad" from seeing or hearing about the "miniature steam locomotives" at the many international expositions of his era. Perfectionist that he was, MacDermot used an exact 1/3 scale, 19 inches, for the track rather than the 15-inch or the 18-inch gauges then prevalent for the miniature railroads. Also, he may have selected the Pacific type rather than the Atlantic type because the former, introduced in 1901 and 1902, was rapidly replacing the latter type as the predominant steam locomotive for passenger service. Two sources say that MacDermot modeled the Overfair locomotives after the Southern Pacific's P-6 class of Pacific types, nos. 2453 to 2458 (Chalie Hoyle's brief account and Norman W. Holmes' book *Prune Country Railroad*).

Additions to the SPRS Archives

Thanks to Vera and Andy McLean for donating their six-year collection of *Locomotive & Railway Preservation* to the SPRS archives. The issues are Nos. 25 through 58, from March-April 1990 through March-April 1996. The magazines will be placed in Al Smith's caboose for your browsing and reference.

While rummaging through and sorting out items in the car barn, Greg Duff found a couple boxes of wooden patterns that were used to make the Overfair parts. Most pieces have an I.D. number stamped on them; many also have an "L.M.M." mark. These are also being stored in Al's caboose. Perhaps someday, someone can go through the MacDermot drawings to find references to these patterns. Greg also found a bunch of long, narrow, curved wooden pieces that may be (???) the lateral beams for the roof of a MacDermot passenger car. We will appreciate help in identifying those pieces.

Elections

After a hotly contested and close race the results are finally in for the new officers for the 1997 SPRS Board of Directors. The new officers are (drum roll, please)

<u>President</u>	Marty Campbell
<u>1st Vice President</u>	Andy McLean
<u>2nd Vice President</u>	Geoffrey Tobin
<u>Secretary</u>	Jim Matheny
<u>Treasurer</u>	Ed Carnegie

Congratulations to Marty and Geoff for their new offices on the Board. Our new President has started his "rein" by making a major decision. The years first Executive Board meeting! It is to be held on Sunday January 12 in the Red House, starting @ 8:30 AM. We will be going over our plans and goals for the up coming year. If you would like to see a project started or something improved let a Board member know your concerns and hopefully it will be addressed at this meeting.

In Memory

We want to remember our friend, **Al Smith**. It was three years ago in December (Dec. 18, 1993) that he passed away. If it were not for his visions, this whole railroad would not be what it is today. It is wondrous 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!"

Observation Car

As I was looking through past news letters of the SPRS, I came across an article mentioning a big accomplishment that was completed during the months of April and May of 1994. The painting of the roundhouse! This major project was all done by one person, Bill McNab! Bill has been instrumental on a lot of projects here at Swanton and has put in many of his own hours to help make the railroad and its facilities what it is today. His most recent job was President of the SPRS. We all appreciate his hard work and look forward working beside him in 1997. THANKS BILL !!

Doing The Splits

Andy McMeans

This is not meant as a complaint, but more so as a question.

At our December workday we had an incident after lunch that resulted in a derailment at Vicente Junction. For those who weren't there, or who didn't really see what went on, I offer the following observation. The work train, consisting of the diesel switch engine, a riding car, two flat cars, and the flat-ballast car had been parked at College Station during the lunch break, having pulled in there from being down the main near Cosgrove with the track crew. After lunch the train started to back down the main line, then reversed direction and headed back past College Station. Unfortunately, the switch at Vicente Junction had been thrown during the lunch break to route the mainline up towards the turntable. Since it is a sprung switch, the train was able to back through it without any problems, but there were definite problems when it changed direction. The rear car had made it totally through the sprung switch, and the second from the rear car had one set of trucks through the points when the direction of travel was changed. Needless to say, the rear car headed for the roundhouse, the second from the read car got confused and tried heading in two directions at once, and both cars eventually had to be lifted (via a motor vehicle mounted crane) such that the trucks could be placed back on rails underneath the cars so they could be reconnected to the train, etc. There was some minor damage to one set of trucks on the ballast car, and the rails near the frog of the Vicente Junction switch were spread a little; the rails were pulled back into shape later that day and the car was set out into the machine shop to have some maintenance work performed on the

bearings. The only person riding on either of those two cars jumped off into the meadow unhurt as the above events were occurring.

So, for the questions.

How are these kinds of situations avoided? Was the person on the rear cars supposedly a Brakeman that should have made sure the switches were set correctly, rather than "springing" through them? Should the switch have been returned to the direction of the College Station work train after the motor-car used it during the lunch hour? (I am guessing that's why it got thrown the other way.) Should the engineer have refrained from making such a reversing movement without ascertaining that the train had not backed through any incorrectly set switches? Other than yelling and screaming, how do we communicate to the engineer when the end of the train does derail?

As for the equipment - there were some surprises in finding out that some of the trucks had no pedestal binders to keep the axles from falling out when the car was lifted - is that a concern? Is it appropriate to have "sprung switches" where we do? Are the indicators sufficiently painted and high enough to be visible from the other end of the trains? Do we have enough radios that work well enough that a radio could have provided communication to the engineer to stop the train sooner?

I realize this was a work day, and we do operate less formally when we are "just running work trains", but are there rules regarding work train movements, switching maneuvers, etc. that we need to be more aware of? And is there equipment that shouldn't be on the tracks until it has passed some kind of safety inspection? Should passengers only ride in proper riding cars even in work trains? Should cars with passengers (even if they are not specifically designed as passenger cars) be as close to the locomotive as possible? Is it OK to have someone riding the rear of the train? etc. etc. etc.

Lots of ideas to think about . . .

Out of Steam ?

January... The month when we all make our New Years resolutions and start off the year with fresh ideas. It is also the month when dues for the Swanton Pacific Railroad are due. You will find enclosed with this newsletter, a membership form. We hope that you can

fill it out and bring it along with your dues to our next workday. If you are unable to attend we ask that you mail it to our address at Cal Poly. These dues will enable you to continue receiving this newsletter and staying informed about the activities of the railroad. Hopefully we will be able to provide a completed roster to every member sometime during the latter part of March or early April. If you want to be included please send in your dues soon. We don't want you to run out of steam and be left out on the siding.

Drawings

The enclosed drawing (C-30) is from a copy of the original as mentioned in Lou Haughney's previous article showing two "Standard Locomotives". We apologize for the poor quality of copy. It is a copy of a copy, of a copy, and then reduced 50% from the original. The drawing is from the collection of the Swanton Pacific Railroad Society.

Calendar

- Jan. 8 Cal Poly work evening
- Jan. 11 SPRS workday
- Feb. 5 Cal Poly work evening
- Feb. 8 SPRS workday
- Mar. 5 Cal Poly work evening
- Mar. 8 SPRS workday

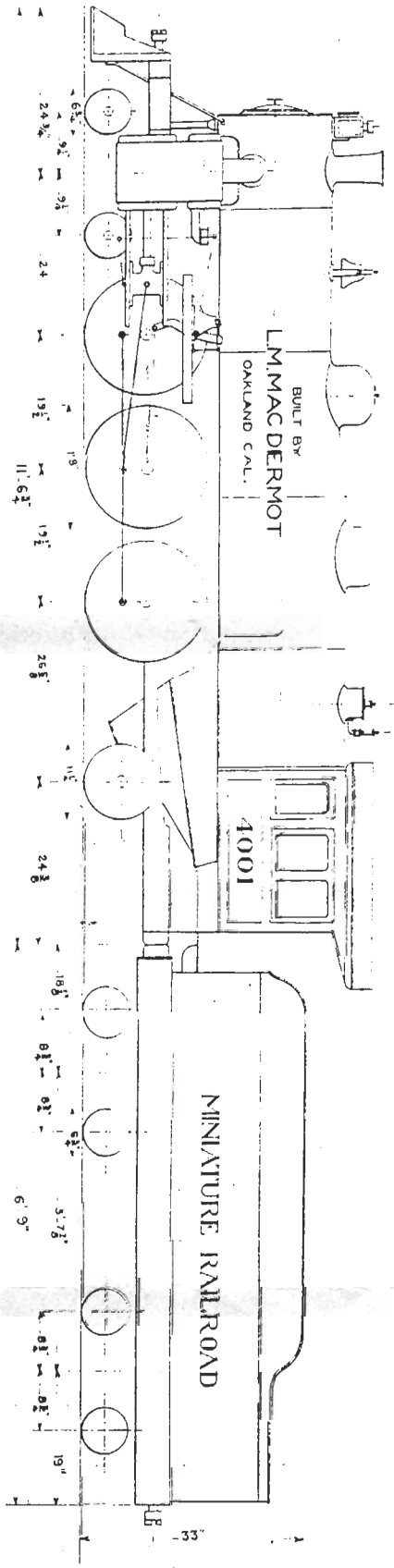
Behind Schedule

Because of vacation schedules and some derailments, this months newsletter has probably arrived to you behind schedule. Individuals involved with the railroad should be familiar with this problem. "We hope to have the problem fixed by next month and we are sorry for the delay".

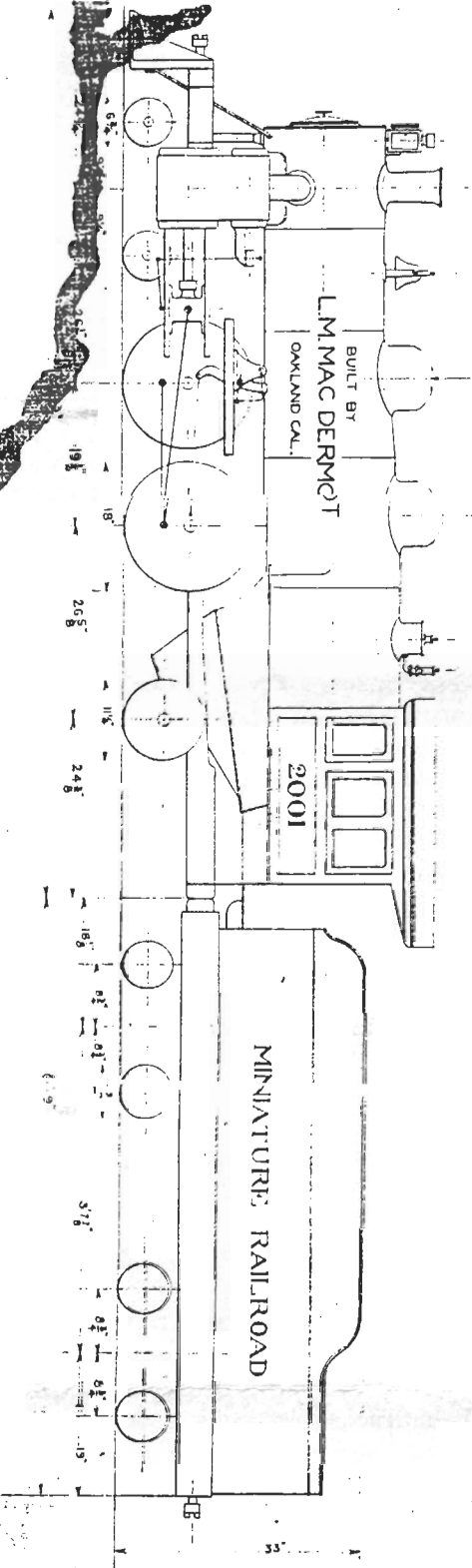
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Since this is the first news letter of 1997, we would all like to wish you a Happy New Year, and hope 1997 will be a prosperous year for everyone.

PACIFIC TYPE



ATLANTIC TYPE



POOR GAUGE LOCOMOTIVES

STANDARD LOCOMOTIVES
 L. M. MAC DERMOT
 OAKLAND, CALIF.
 ENGINEERS