All Aboard !!

Our workdays for July are Wednesday evening, July 9th, at Cal Poyl, starting @ 6:00 P. M. and at the Swanton Ranch, Saturday morning, July 12th, and Saturday morning, July 26th, starting @ 9:30 A. M.

On Track
with your Director,
Ed Carnegie

This has been one fast month—seems like I just finished writing my little blurb yesterday and its already time to write the next one for July. Since the last newsletter SPRR hosted a very successful "Cal Poly Train Day," a fund raiser for the Red Cross, two work days, and a train ride for a Davenport summer student program.

The month of June was exceptionally busy for getting things done for the SPRR. The Wednesday evening work night at Cal Poyl had a few of our members come down to the shop to work on tracks. Marty Campbell spent a week's vacation working on the railroad. Elmer Stone spent most of the week and Feet FitzPatrick came down the day of the pour. The first few days were spent making forms, leveling track, and getting ready for the concrete pour. Tuesday, June 24th the Swanton Pacific Farm supplied 3 student interns, Steve Dilley, Steve Anten, and Tammy Bleysey, and Jerry Kisz a full time employee to help with the pour. Eleven yards of concrete arrived at 2:00 PM and by 5:00 we had a new road crossing, a foundation for a wig-wag, and new slab next to the turntable leading into the machine shop. The next time you see Elmer, Fitz, Marty, Marty Ann, Jerry, Steve, Steve, or Tammy—thank them for a job well done.

Other accomplishments of the June workdays from the following work crews were:

• Track crew—replaced all the ties through the mainline at Coggrove
• Roundhouse crew—worked on the turntable leveling and replacing the rotten ties under the turntable rail.
• They also removed some of the bad ties on the lead to the machine shop and added the third lead rail that was never installed.
• Car barn crew—worked on car brakes
• Landscaping crew—tended to the garden areas and mowed the lawns.

Cal Poly Day was on June 7, and was a great success! I want to thank all of you that participated in helping to make the day so successful. As a volunteer organization we do put our heart and soul into it and we feel the results are worth the effort. We need to keep our volunteers happy as well as the people we serve.

The train rides were all successful, no mishaps—our "in-house training crews" are really operating the train rides quite smoothly. We had two "family trees" return. A special tree planting train ride and dedication of the McNab Redwood Grove was conducted on the first train ride in the afternoon. Our thanks go out to the James Murphy Family and the Paul and Dave Wissler of Cuesta Equipment who brought "their" trees back to us as much larger plants to plant on the property. It was obvious that the trees had been caring for as Myra Murphy kissed her tree good-bye and told it to do well here. John Hayashi and family, purchased ten trees last year to plant on the ranch but were planted earlier this Spring. The "adobe tree" planting was a great idea and will probably be done again next year.

New memberships received in May and June were as follows:

May
Liz Allison Half Moon Bay
John Tweed Davenport

June
James Anderson San Luis Obispo
George Johnson Burbank
Tom Middley Davenport
Robert Parkinson Berkeley
Fred Vertel Los Altos
Tom Vertel Los Altos

On behalf of the entire organization we welcome each of you into our "train family" and we certainly look forward to seeing you at some of our next events. Many of our members may not recognize you right away so please introduce yourselves so that we can get to better know you and vice versa.
Items that will be coming up either for the July weekday or for August and beyond that you will want to mark on your calendar are as follows:

- Track crew will work on replacing ties. If enough people show up we can split up the crew. Two or three could be elevating the track, removing old ties, leveling the old ballast and spreading the underlay. Three or four could then place ties and spike them. If we have three more they could spread ballast level and tamp. Eight to ten track people sure could make the job move faster.
- The roundhouse crew will be leveling the turnout.

The Exposition's official historian presents an interesting commentary on the effectiveness of the Exposition Terminal Railway.

"The railway was not so serviceable as had been expected, and it may be that the next exposition will find itself able to forego any thing more than a track to the Palace of Transportation. Twenty times as much construction material was handled by truck. The railway was very valuable for moving the exhibits for the Machinery and the Transportation Palaces, but aside that the motor truck could probably have done all the work. At the time the Exposition was planned, however, and during the early days of its development, the motor truck had hardly emerged from the experimental stage. It began to assert itself as a serious factor of transportation during the Exposition year."

The writer commented in similar manner when he discussed the competing roles of the Overfair Railroad versus the Fadig automobile trains in transporting visitors around the grounds. He was equally optimistic and prophetic about the future dominance of the motor vehicles.

The tracks of the Exposition Terminal Railway were paved over just before the Exposition was opened to the public. So, how were the heavy machinery and transportation exhibits removed after the close of the Exposition? The historian does not tell at least in this section from which all this information has been taken. (The Index for the five, big volumes is not too complete.) He does identify the type of locomotives used. The book, California Railroads, An Encyclopedia of ... Railroads in California, by A. A. Pickforth, states that the Exposition Railway "was proposed to build an electric railway." However, an electric railway on such a busy construction site for only one or two years does not seem practical, economical, or safe. Perhaps some other resource about the Exposition tells more about the kind of locomotion used by the Terminal Railway.

Note: All of the above information and details, except the brief quote from Pickworth's book, are taken from Frank Todd Morton's The Story of the Exposition, An Official History., Vol. 1, pp. 340-341.
Observation Car

Smith, Swanton and Bygone Days
by Hart Fairclough

While involved in home life and Scouting, Al's fascination for trains kept growing throughout his younger years. Undoubtedly, it started with his proximity to the Southern Pacific tracks running through Swanton Junction right on the family's orchard property. However, he still had his own electric trains set from his youth, and continued to enjoy it even during his war years. This I know because he brought his Lionel engine and various equipment over to my house once. Along with my American Flyer train, track and switches, we connected a grand layout all over our large living room floor with both engines running simultaneously.

The electric trains of his youth were fun, but Al's attraction to the real thing, the big steam locomotives, grew stronger with time. Vasona Junction was the spot where SP trains from Santa Cruz and Los Gatos branched off to San Francisco or Sept. 7th to San Jose. The location of the Smith family 27 acre ranch was such that the trains either passed in front of their property or actually ran right through part of their orchard.

Vasona Junction was not very busy, but there was always the morning and evening commuter trains from Los Gatos to SF as well as special trains to Santa Cruz. Occasional freight trains came by, particularly after nearby Permanent Cement went into operation. Because of the turns and the switches involved, the trains proceeded more slowly through the Junction.

Since birth, Al was in an ideal spot to become an avid big steam locomotive enthusiast, if he had a natural inclination in that direction - which he did. Gradually he built up knowledge of the various trains, their schedules, destinations, as well as many of the SP personnel. In time, this led to opportunities for Al to catch some informal jaunts on parts of the more local trains between his home, Los Gatos, Campbell, and San Jose.

Behind the Smith family house was a fairly large two story "tank house." During the sixties Al gradually built a rather extensive HO train setup on the second floor. His setup was in less space than our larger one on our living room back in the thirties, but it was more elaborate.

Most of you know that the OSH Short Line cabooses now parked in the meadow of the Swanton Pacific RR, was a pet project of Al's during his years with Orchard Supply Hardware. He procured the cabooses, set it on rails behind the San Jose store and then fixed it up as his outside office. Those of us who got a 1973 Christmas greeting from Al, received a postcard-size photo of that cabooses with Al standing outside by the back door and waving a greeting of "Holiday Joy!"

When opportunity was available, he experienced different trains, both Southern Pacific and ATSF, and even the recently restored FP-7 5231. He salvaged the old PS-1 4000, culled the Santa Cruz line, and shipped it to his home in San Jose, where it conveys memories of his younger years.

From the brief paragraphs presented in this article, one can readily understand how natural it was for Al Smith when he retired with money, time, energy and opportunity, to establish the Swanton Pacific Railroad.

--- to be continued ---

Buckles

A chance to own a piece of SPR history has just become available. The Swanton Pacific Railroad now has their very own brass buckle belts. These buckleless all individually cast and each has it's own serial number. Each buckle show the words Swanton Pacific Railroad with the icon SP in the center on a textured background. They are oval in shape and measure approximately 2 1/4 inches by 3 inches. So by purchasing a belt buckle you will have the only one with a specific number assigned to it. A one of a kind. Think what they will be worth in the future. You'll be able to give them down to family members. After a great gift. Each buckle is only $10.00 to SPRS members and $15.00 to non-members. There were only 156 made so get yours as soon as possible. There will be available at the workday in July and the following workdays. For those not able to attend a workday and would like one mailed to them, there will be an additional $3.50 for shipping.

Barbecue

Another barbecue and run has been requested by the Big Creek Trout Farm as a fundraiser for them. This will happen on Sunday, August 10, 1997. We will need help to run the train and also to barbecue. For those at the regular August workday this will be a perfect time to stay over night and help the following day. We hope that you will be able to stay and help on Sunday and support this worthy cause.

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Swanton Pacific Railroad Society

Calendar

July 9 ...................................................... Cal Poly work evening
July 12 ...................................................... SPRS workday
July 26 ...................................................... Golden Spikes (run)
Aug 6 ...................................................... Cal Poly work evening
Aug 9 ...................................................... SPRS workday
Aug 10 ...................................................... Big Creek Trout Farm (run)
Aug 23 ...................................................... SPRS workday
Sept. 28 ...................................................... Land Trust (run)
Oct. 12 ...................................................... 2472 (run)

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
Bioresource and Agricultural Engineering Department
Cal Poly State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

(805) 756-2620
(805) 756-2626 FAX
http://www.calpoly.edu/802--/swanton/sprs.html;

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

Swanton Pacific Railroad Society
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