On Track
with your Director,
Ed Carnegie

De Ja Vu—it happened again this year! The rains came and came again. Not as much damage so far as last year, but enough to make one upset. At mile post 2 the same place where last year we had a 75 feet washout it happened again. Last winter we thought that we had stabilized the area with two large wire baskets filled of rock that were placed to divert the raging stream (riven) away from the bank. This fall we were forced to remove the baskets as “they are not natural to the stream” or face a fine or imprisonment from Fish and Game. Reluctantly this past November we removed the baskets and mother nature did the rest. The bank is now about three feet from the track at one place, this is where last year we cut into the bank and moved the track about 3 feet away from the creek. This year the we lost about 120 feet of bank along the creek and up to 6 feet wide in some locations. It would seem to me a few well placed baskets full of rock is better than the loss of hundreds of tons of good top soil. I don’t think that good top soil is that good for the fish either. Enough of that for now as we will repair the damage and keep moving ahead.

January work day was wet and rainy and only a few stout hearted souls showed up to work. The car barn crew had extra help as the track crew didn’t feel like going out in the rain and driving spikes. One of the old flat cars was taken temporarily out-of-service to work over the breaks, repair the tracks, and stiffen up the car frame. Andy and Fritz returned the next week and finished the work on the flat car and I am told that it is ready for service now. As a side note, when the car was turned over the bottom side of the deck was a sign from the Calistoga Steam Train. The sign was preserved and a new deck was replaced.

The roundhouse crew spend a rainy day working on details of the 1912 and 1914 as well as getting one of our newest members to paint the ceiling.

A few days prior to the work day, Tom Vertel, got bit by a track bug, and removed and laid out over 400 ties! Course the next step is to get them all aligned, spiked and ballasted.

The day following the workday, the new board, under Bill Engleman, had a very productive board meeting. Details will be covered later.

Welcome to new members:
Lorraine Bayuk Portola Valley
Robert Hopkins Ventura
Brian Laschkewitch La Selva Beach

I remind all of you that NOW is the time to send in any names that you would like to be invited to the up coming Al Smith Day. Presently, we have about 300 names on our invitation list, but always have room for more. You just need to let me know. The date has been set as Sunday April 5th as we felt that we couldn’t have it on Easter Sunday (2nd Sunday). Besides, Al’s birthday is April 6th, so the 5th is closer to his actual birthday. Invitations are going to be sent out by the first of March, so forward any names and addresses that you would like an invitation sent to.

Reminder—with Al Smith’s Day on Sunday, April 5, and Easter the second Sunday of April, there will be no official workday on the second Saturday in April. We will have a workday on the first Saturday, April 4, just prior to Al’s Day. Mark your calendars for this change!
Behind the Throttle
with your President,
Bill Engleman

Our last work day saw some progress on several fronts, despite the rain that kept us mostly indoors. I was buried in the roundhouse most of the day, successfully extinguishing a stubborn plug from the 1912 locomotive so that we could install a new set of try-cocks. My daughter Molly was assisting me by handing me various tools and drillbits necessary for the task. I did venture out of the cab long enough to note that our newest member Brian Laschewitsch jumped right in and was helping out with painting the roundhouse ceiling. Hopefully another few days of drier weather will see a completion of the painting and we can move the 1913 Locomotive “Kit” into the roundhouse so we can begin the long awaited rebuilding and reassembly. The term “some assembly required” takes on a whole new meaning here at Swanton!

We have a committee together to organize and begin construction of the 1913 and will have had our preliminary meeting by the time you read this newsletter. I will try to keep you informed of our progress from month to month in this column. In the next couple of months our volunteers will be doing some additional work on the 1948 drives to ensure its participation in our upcoming summer schedule.

I also noted that Andy McLean and Fitx have the flatcar ready for the next workday with the installation of airbrakes, handbrake and a new deck (thanks to Bill McNab’s donation of plywood). Progress was also made on one of the Crown cars which was modified with an airbrake line.

I would like to note that the replacement of ties by our track crew has been greatly accelerated by the efforts of Tom Vertei who seems to be going for a record, I understand that he has set over 600 ties to date, over 400 ties in the last month alone! Go Tom GO!

We had our first board meeting of 1998 or Sunday, the notes of which can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. We have a few items from the meeting which I would like to discuss here. Martha Neilen has stepped down as Chair of the Social and Publicity committee after a number of years of faithful service to our organization. We appreciate her years of involvement and all of her efforts to date. I have been assured that she will continue to be an active member and is willing to work with whomever will be assuming her responsibilities. We now have an opening for this position. I encourage any of you who would like to be considered for this position to contact me directly before our next board meeting in March at which time a decision will be made concerning her successor. We have a couple of people who have already expressed an interest in this position, however I want all members to have an equal chance to be considered. As always, if you do not wish the full responsibility of the job, you can always volunteer to serve on the committee to assist where needed. There is always lets to do!

Ed Carnegie has come up with an interesting idea in the form of a replica of a control tower modeled after the one at the Overfair railway, and has sketched it out on his computer from photographs taken at the fair. It looks interesting. I’m sure he would be glad to discuss it with anyone who has an interest in seeing it built here at Swanton.

Lou Haughney brought up the topic of the deteriorating condition of our cabooses, and how we should try to do some repairs and repainting before they deteriorate too much. If any of you have an interest in helping to restore the cabooses, please contact me. If there is enough interest, we can form a “Cabooses Committee” to restore them and to ensure that they will continue to be a delight to both old and new kids.

Plans are well underway for our annual At Smith day celebration, so make sure your calendar is clear for April 5th. We want to see you there! Help us celebrate The Man and our historic railroad.
Likewise, Al must have followed closely the disposal of the Overfair equipment; namely, the sale by Jones in 1959 of engines nos. 1912, 1913, and 1500 to Shaw, Jervis, and Franklin and the sale after Billy's death of engines nos. 1912 and 1913 to Bob Maxfield. Then, when Maxfield started operation of the Calistoga Steam Railroad in 1975, Al have visited there at least twice and later expressed an interest in acquiring the equipment. Shortly after closing down his operation on August 4, 1979, Maxfield sold all his rolling stock and equipment to Al Smith. Maxfield and Smith had been negotiating the sale since the spring of 1979. Dismantling of the Calistoga Steam Railroad started immediately. As Hart told in last month's newsletter, transfer of the equipment to Swanton had begun in late August. Locomotives nos. 1912 and 1913, rails, switches, passenger cars, a gasoline rail buggy, the disassembled turntable, the plans for a roundhouse that was never built in Calistoga, and miscellaneous items and parts, all were moved to the Swanton Pacific Ranch by the end of 1979.

(Photographs from that period show that engine no. 1912 had been painted by Billy Jones in the colors of the Southern Pacific "Daylight", on which Billy had been an engineer. Maxfield did not change its paint scheme; in fact, he never operated that engine. Thus, it still had the Daylight's colors when Al acquired it. Can anyone verify this statement? If true, when did Al change the color scheme?)

By late 1979, Al had started building the Swanton Pacific Railroad. According to a visitor at the last Land Trust Day outing, Al put a notice in the Santa Cruz newspaper in which he invited interested persons to help. Many responded, including friends from the Wildcat Railroad and from Southern Pacific personnel.

The succeeding events in the SPRR's history will be told in future articles. I will appreciate assistance in filling in details and verifying dates from those who worked with Al in those years.

A reminder, dues are now payable.
Fitz already has the car taken down to the deck and is proceeding to assess the condition of the frames. I hope none will need replacement as they are 1914 originals!

At the locomotives, Andy (2nd VP/Safety Eng.) and I met with Pres. Bill Engelmann in Swanton on 1/31 (Sat.). Following up on earlier Board and committee discussions, we decided to remove the Motorcar's worn-out hydrostatic unit for ASAP replacement. There is no nameplate or other info anywhere on the outside of this, so it is felt that it should be taken to a Sunstrand dealer (the presumed maker) for correct I.D. Andy and Fitz began pulling it out that night. After the Dottie-roughed, we can begin serious work on the 502's torque converter and transfer case.

New member Brian Laschikwisch spent last work day painting the ceiling in the roundhouse. As soon as the second coat is finished, we can move the 1913'S boiler in. Brian is an accomplished software designer, and has volunteered to help with our website, as well as other high (and even low) tech projects. Thanks for the help, Brian, and welcome aboard!

Pres. Bill and I continued our 1/31 meeting another couple of hours, focusing on the 1913's restoration and making a tentative list of prioritized projects. The boiler work can proceed parallel to the other work, so that's why it will be good to get it moved into the roundhouse and get started. The beginning of the rest of the project will involve lots of cleaning, measuring and documenting. It has already been determined that the constraints on volunteers' time will necessitate sending some of the machine work out, and we discussed several possibilities. More on this later.

Assist topic discussed with Andy was the location and design of the proposed pit to enable us to work under the engines. This was also a follow-up of earlier board and committee sessions. In the last year our thinking has shifted a lot on this topic, from an open-air steel trestle above a slab to a more conventional pit in the machine shop. Now we have been made aware of the possibility of using a lift of the muffler-shop variety which would give even better access to the work and require far less digging to install. The location also moved to the #3 roundhouse stall, pending further discussion with all concerned parties.

Work has next commenced on the Overfair flat car/ballast car. This car was originally refurbished and had outside-hung brake beams and hand brake installed at Billy Jones's by Neil Vodden and other friends. It was rebuilt again in 1975 by Erich Thomsen's Redwood Valley Shops for Calistoga, incorporating ballast chutes and a removable hopper-car "box" for use building the railroad. Many miles and tons of rock later, the "box" is over-due for replacement. A better design will be used for less stress on the frame and better unloading performance, and the air brakes will of course be made fully functional.

The meeting was called to order by President Bill Engelman at 9:30 AM, January 11, 1998. S P Ranch - Redhouse.


Guests: Fred and Tom Vettel, Mary Ann Carnegie, Linda Engelman, and Brian Laschewititsch.

The Executive Board Minutes of November 9, 1997 were approved as read.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

TREASURER'S REPORT - Ed Carnegie.

The Society’s cash balance as of the first of the year was $9,500. We will receive a draw of $18,000 this quarter bringing the balance to $27,500. This will cover all outstanding operational bills including $15,000 for ties and approximately $5,000 for our share of the new water system.

Last year saw earnings of near 18% on the endowment, if this continues throughout this year the endowment balance should exceed $2,000,000.

SECRETARY - "Fitz" Fitzpatrick.

The Executive Board report will show motions actually made during Reports of Officers and Committees as items of new business with forward reference in the report. This provides a continuity between reports but does not restrict the Board to rules of order not practical in this small an organization.

TRACK - Elmer Stone.

Replacement of switch stand ties, carpet and ballast is pending the treatment of the replacement ties. No rock should be added to the switch stands until the ties are replaced.

Tie replacement from the South end of Scott Creek is scheduled for this year and should see completion to the ‘wyte’ by years end. Tom Vettel has laid out over 400 ties in the last month - Carnegie.

Discussion: There is a rock slide on the track near mile marker 1 - Engelman.
Would Granite Rock be willing to donate ballast to the railroad and has anyone contacted the company or its officers? - Jones. Donations are a function of Cal Poly corporate relations and Granite Rock currently is donating to Cal Poly. Rock costs are close to 50/50, material/transportation with expenditures last year of $12,000. Carnegie, Carnegie to check with corporate relations.

FACILITIES AND GROUNDS - Ed Carnegie.

The remainder of the lawn will be planted at the South end of the meadow and should be in good shape by spring. The "Ladies Auxiliary" has planted many flower beds near the meadow, much to the culinary delight of local deer. The boxwood "Lazy SP" near the caboose suffered some frost damage but appears to be recovering.

Introduced the concept of building a control tower at the south end of San Vicente Junction modeled on the tower at the Overfair railway. Some discussion ensued but no action was taken at this time.

The new water system now supplies the meadow, caboose, and the Redhouse. Plumbing to George's house, the west end of the machine shop, and the roundhouse has yet to be completed. Water quality tests indicate we will require a reverse osmosis (RO) system to provide water for the steam locomotives at a cost of about $10,000. (See New Business)

To provide safe convenient oil storage it appears that the optimum solution is to construct a concrete building cut into the bank adjacent to the roundhouse and a walkway between the two. (See new Business)

Discussion: Morehouse suggested we install a speed limit sign of five miles per hour in the driveway. All agreed with the suggestion with the caveat that the limit should be four and a half or some other unusual number, a la Quito Rd. in Saratoga with a 19 MPH speed limit, to catch drivers' attention. No action was taken at this time.

HISTORY - Lou Haughey

Part I - Historical Archives

Accomplishments in 1997:

Much new material was found or donated by family and friends including: Al Smith's moments, (tie tacks, buckles), a collection of 'Al's snapshot photographs (Overfair railway. Charlie Hoyle. Oakland Zoo. Delivery of the 502, 1912 and 1913), original photos and negatives of MacDermot and MacDermot estate grounds prior to its sale in about 1940.

'Chapters' of SPRS history were published in the newsletter.

Account's of Al's early life prepared by Hart Fairclough for the newsletter.

Goals for 1998:

Continue preparing chapters on SPRS history for monthly newsletter, now working on the Al Smith era.

Prepare comprehensive history for publication as a booklet.

Prepare brochure for handouts.

Sort, preserve, and display the material uncovered in 1997. Any help from new and current members graciously accepted.

Continue preparation of displays for 'open houses'.

Part II - Cabooses

An incidental duty associated with being the Historian is the maintenance of the cabooses.

In 1997 obtained furnishings of two filing cabinets, a desk chair, and two side chairs.

Goals for 1998:

OSH/Al's caboose: Arrange photos, memorabilia, etc., for display inside the caboose, and open the caboose to the members on workdays. Refurbish the exterior, paint, and replace walkways on top.

Santa Fe caboose: Total refurbishment of both interior and exterior including: rust removal, paint prep, repair or replace damaged woodwork - especially in the cupola, and repainting. Install original caboose furnishings now stored in the trailer.
Any comments, questions, or other feedback, regarding the ‘chapters’ in the newsletter, from the members would more than welcome. Fred Vertel expressed an interest in SPRR history and volunteered to assist Lou.

Discussion: Haughney asked if the Society has a SPRS rubber stamp to mark the backs of photos and other items that now belong to the Society. Carnegie to provide.

Carnegie to assist in updating handout for open house events.

Jones recommended the Society send Hunt Fairclough a letter of appreciation for his efforts. (See New Business)

Jones asked if anyone knows the whereabouts of the boiler inspection and insurance forms from the Hartford Insurance Co for the 1913. As told to him by Neil Vodden this was a legal size blue paper and dated from the early 40’s. The boiler is a ‘non-code’ ASME vessel as it was built prior to ASME’s existence, however MacDermot overhauled the boilers with a safety factor of seven, as opposed to the now common factor of four, and it was insured when it ran in Oakland in the early 40’s. MacDermot ran the locomotive as MacDermot, Overseas, and Mountain Lion railways, if not others. FitzPatrick to check with Hartford. Haughney and Nielson to inspect documents still unsorted.

Jones stated he had a collection of slides of early work on SPRS that may be included in the archives.

Carnegie said we have paint for the cabooses, however it is two-part automotive paint and may require special application. FitzPatrick to check with known user. Morehouse asked if we would require a qualified contractor to provide preparation work. No action taken at this time.

ENGINEs AND ROLLING STOCK - Randy Jones

An airbrake line has been installed on one Crown car. The tool flat car has an airbrake line installed and brakes are being installed on the trucks now by Campbell, DiFrancesco, FitzPatrick, and McLean.

The 1912 had all three toy-cocks installed by the swing shift, (John Tomlin), last night.

When the roundhouse interior work is finished the boiler for the 1913, and associated parts, will be moved from the machine shop to the roundhouse.

Discussion: Jones asked if we could restore the 1913 in time for the 1999 railfair in Sacramento. He was given many different answers and more questions. (See New Business)

OPERATIONS - John Tomlin

Promotions to: Conductor - Tom Vertel as of November 1997.


Motor car operator - Tom Vertel as of December 1997

No classes are scheduled at this time.

Goals for 1998

Rewrite the General Safety and Conductor class as two classes, rather than combined, and create a home-study course for each class.

Develop training courses for the 507 - Diesel and steam books.

Provide Engineer requalification through a written exam and a check ride. Qualifications in this year are good for the following year.

Requalify Conductors and train crews.

Discussion: Haughney suggested that notice of General Safety classes be printed in the newsletter in advance so members could plan to attend. So directed. (See New Business)

Other classes are scheduled in response to member request.
SOCIALL AND PUBLICITY - Martha Neilson

Cal Poly Days have moved from June to September.

The reimbursement we request for run days should be increased to cover overhead costs for paper towels, toilet paper and the like. Currently those costs are coming from our operating funds.

We need to have a locked cabinet, using the common key, in the caboose for housekeeping supplies.

Run days scheduled are:

April 5 Al Smith Day
May 15 Cal Poly Staff
July 25 Golden Spike

SAFETY - Andy McLean

Air brake rules are now in revision three - should be published soon.

All passenger cars have a brake line. The work cars are having lines installed and brakes where necessary.

OLD BUSINESS:

From November 9, 1997: Machine Shop and Track Pit Committees - No report. The 1913 boiler and parts are in the way.

Sand blast cabinet - Carnegie, a 4' by 3' bead blaster and media have been ordered.

ByLaws - FitzPatrick, the committee members have not had a chance to meet as yet, however changes to the quorum necessary for a general business meeting and the definition of an Executive Board majority were discussed.

Keystone car doors - FitzPatrick installed November 22, 1997.

Keystone roofs - Tobin (yesterday), work facilities were not available.

Roundhouse - Painting in progress, half done.

Tuntable - Jones, waiting for a cement pourable day.

NEW BUSINESS:

McLean moved that Carnegie design an oil storage facility combined with water treatment facilities and proceed with its construction. Seconded by Jones. Approved by unanimous consent.

FitzPatrick moved that a “Committee of 1913” be formed to estimate the man-hours and materials required to restore the 1913 with the goal of being able to run at the 1999 Sacramento Railroad. Seconded by Carnegie. Approved by unanimous consent.

Tabled until next meeting: appointments to Social Committee chair.

By action of the President:

Appointed to the committee ad hoc “Committee of 1913”; Carnegie, Engelman, Jones, and Geoff Tobin (in absentia).

Directed the Secretary to write a letter of appreciation to Hart Fairclough for his signature.

Directed the Secretary to publish the schedule of General Safety classes in the newsletter.

GOOD OF THE SOCIETY: Martha Neilson, after many years of faithful service as Chair of the Social and Publicity Committee, has tendered her resignation in the interest of getting other members involved in the workings of the Society. She has graciously offered to assist whomsoever is appointed Chair of the Committee.

Brian Laschewitsch was introduced to the Executive Board as a new member by Randy Jones.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 Noon. The next scheduled meeting is Sunday, March 15, 1998 at 9:30 AM in the Rockhouse.

Respectfully submitted, RGB Fitz FitzPatrick, Sect.