



SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 64

Cal Poly

August 1998

On Track

with your Director, Ed Carnegie

EUREKA!

On July 20th the Fish and Game representative delivered to us a signed 1603 permit to start construction on the washed out Scott Creek bridge.

I would like to thank Brian Dieterick and Wally Mark for their assistance in the permit process. Brian developed the bank stabilization plan that finally was approved. Wally came to our rescue by developing a re-vegetation plan for the area around the bridge.

As soon as I knew that we had a permit I started ordering materials that are needed for the construction of the bridge revetments. Bob Nichols comes through again, with his contacts. We received a good price on all the rebar, and an excavator.

I arrived on Swanton on the 23rd and Tom and I worked on the bridge, laying out two sections for the welding crew Saturday. We now have one side welded, prepped and painted. Two sections of the other side were welded by the crew from Drake Welding. It was very impressive to see that rig show up with all the welding equipment ready to go. Our sincere thanks go out to Drake Welding and especially Ken and Dan for all the welding that has been done.

Early Monday morning a truck from Air Vol arrived with 22 tons of concrete block for the revetments. It was interesting that Air Vol from SLO was able to deliver the blocks to Swanton much cheaper than any concrete block supplier in the Santa Cruz area.

The next day 5,000 pounds of rebar arrived from San Jose. We now have most of the supplies to start construction. In a few days an excavator will arrive to start the earth work on the North revetment.

Representatives from King Crane met with us on Sunday, July 26, to discuss the best way to erect and set the bridge in place. Their suggestion was to construct the bridge on the creek bank adjacent to where it will eventually be placed. This will make construction much easier as we will be working on firm ground and we will be able to reach all areas with ladders. This means that we will not be working over the water and thus in a much safer working environment. Once the revetment and the bridge is completed a large crane will move in, lift out the old bridge, and set in the new one. So, let the game, of bridge building, begin!

Needless to say, the last two work days have been very busy.

The Track Crew - Elmer Stone and his crew went to work on the bridge by prepping and painting.

The Roundhouse crew - Marty Campbell was engineer on the 1912 for the Golden Spikes annual outing Swanton.

Guy LaMar and Bill McNab finished painting the ceiling of the roundhouse. It sure is nice to have that task completed.

The Car barn Crew - Fitz FitzPatrick, Andy McLean, and Bob Kubiaticz worked on brakes for the hopper car, while Vera McLean sorted nuts and bolts.

The Bridge Crew - Drake Welding came both workdays to weld sections of the bridge together. They were assisted by Randy Jones, Tom Vertel and myself. It was all Tom and I could do to just keep work stacked up for the three welders!

The Grounds Crew - Tom Vertel installed a new sprinkler system in the circle and in front of the two cabooses. He along with Fred Vertel have started to repaint College Station.

Molly and Linda Engelman, and Mary Ann Carnegie cleaned and waxed the rest of the white globes in the meadow area. Additional plantings and rock placements are taking hold along the hillside.

The Historians - Lou Haughney continues to organize and maintain historical materials given to the Swanton Pacific RR archives.

REMINDER: The first and second part articles, "From Panama to Poly" have been published in the Live Steam magazine. We have obtained several copies of the articles and will have them available for the membership at a cost of \$5.00 per magazine. (Cover price is \$6.50)

Remember, that with all the activities scheduled in August, construction on one project or another will take place almost every day in August. We do have two scheduled work weekends a month (2nd and 4th Saturdays) However, if you are unable to make the second Saturday of the month, please come on the fourth. Mary Ann and I will be up there August 1-11, and then again August 14-30. If you can come by please do.

New memberships received over the last few months were as follows:

Richard & Zanna Zulch	Orinda
Steve Oky	Pleasant Hill
Patrick Marooney	Eugene, OR

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.

Social Committee Update

Fred Vertel & Mary Ann Carnegie

On Sunday, June 28, we had our first Swanton Pacific Family Fun Day. We had a pretty good turn, about 40 people all together. Many of our members brought children, grandchildren or friends to experience the ambiance and hospitality of Swanton. A fine meal was prepared by Fred and Company. However, the real excitement came when members were given the throttle of the 1914! Under the excellent leadership and guidance of Randy Jones the following members/guests were "engineers":

Bill Hoey, Brendon Hilton, Tom Vertel, Bill Engelman, Linda Engelman, Molly Engelman, Tony Pratkanis, Catlin Matthais, and Mary Ann Carnegie

On Saturday, July 25, we hosted the annual Golden Spikes family get together. Approximately 75 people showed up for a fun-filled day of rides and renewing friendships. Some of the retired Southern Pacific personnel spun some pretty tall tales, but we enjoyed them very much. We learned a few things about some of our members that we never knew before.

Dates to mark on your calendar:

August 8	Work weekend
August 9	Board Meeting
August 22	Work Weekend
August 30	Cal Poly Alumni & New Students
September 12	Work Weekend
September 26	Work Weekend
September 27	Land Trust
October 3	Cal Poly Days
October 4	Lone Star Picnic

For Land Trust we usually just provide train rides, but for the October 3, Cal Poly Days we put on the entire show. Remember to provide us with names and addresses of guests you may wish to invite. In August and September we will be getting our committees organized to make this event very memorable and successful. We are hoping to attract a large crowd.

Behind the Throttle

with your President, **Bill Engelman**

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We had a short vacation in July, Linda, Molly and I rode Amtrak from Emeryville to Denver and had a great time. Molly really enjoyed the upper berth, and it was hard to get her out of it at times! Unfortunately, I missed the vista dome and the parlor car that I remember from the last time I made that trip many years ago. Many thanks to Bill McNab for his surprise visit to the Emeryville station with provisions for the trip as we were leaving. It was fun to have a Swanton representative see us off.

The bridge construction is progressing, we finally got the go-ahead from Fish and Game, so the race is on for sure to complete the project by the deadline. Work has begun on the revetments, the foundations for the bridge. We have passed the halfway mark, many of the sections are assembled and painted now. We have had lots of help from the guys at Drake Welding, and of course from our own Randy Jones.

After meeting with the crane operator, we have been assured that he can lift the entire bridge into place at one time, thereby greatly simplifying the assembly. We will assemble the entire bridge on the ground and then move it into position.

Mr. Bill McNab found a school that was being demolished in his neighborhood of Kensington, so Bill, Tom Vertel and I spent two very long days there dismantling part of it in exchange for some construction materials for the railroad. We were able to recover a considerable amount of tongue and groove redwood and 3 1/2 inch diameter metal poles, along with some wooden beams. We even obtained some nice gas furnaces and some blowers to help keep our buildings warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. It was a lot of work and I doubt that we will volunteer for something like that again for a while...

The Swanton Pacific Railroad social committee experimented with some socializing last week when we attended the showing of the silent film "The General" starring Buster Keaton at the Stanford theatre. For those of you who may have trouble remembering the film, it stars a steam locomotive, so it was appropriate viewing. We all cringed when one of the engines went into the river, and we decided that our safety committee definitely would not approve of some of the operating procedures we observed, however the good guy got the girl and the engine in the end, so all ended well. We all had a great time and even went to Holy Cow for ice cream milkshakes afterward.

This last week I joined Randy and Marty for some more work on the diesel. Randy and I decided that the best way to get into it was to remove the superstructure, so we lifted off two of the three sections and found that it dramatically improved access to the machinery. We pulled the radiator out for repairs and I spent some time cleaning the airfilter assembly which obviously had not been done in a long time. The torque converter has been rebuilt and should be installed by now, the transfer case is still waiting for some new gears.

Tom and Fred Vertel are progressing on painting the station, it is a lot more work than it looks like. The "ladies gardening club" has planted lots more flowers and it is starting to look a lot more like a flower garden with a few weeds, rather than a weed patch with a few flowers. Keep up the good work, MaryAnn and crew.

We have workdays scheduled for the 8th and the 22nd, and an executive board meeting on the 9th. We look forward to seeing you then.

There is almost always something going on at Swanton these days, especially now since Ed and MaryAnn are there nearly six days a week. If you have a day off to help, I am sure Ed would appreciate it, just call the railroad number at 1-408-423-8204 and let him know.

THINK SAFETY

In the Caboose

with your Historian, Lou Haughney

“Little House on the Prairie” Author Visits The Panama Pacific International Exposition

Laura Ingalls Wilder’s series of “Little House” books have been enjoyed by many families, including ours, for years. In late August 1915, she came to San Francisco for two months to stay with her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, and the latter’s husband, Gillette Lane. During that stay, she visited the Panama Pacific International Exposition many times. Her long, chatty letters to her husband were saved and later published as a book. Recently, we found it in the local library. I was hoping that she would have described a ride on the Overfair Railroad.

Unfortunately, for our particular interest in the Fair, she does not seem to have ridden on the Overfair Railroad. She tells about walking and walking and walking throughout the grounds. Once when she was tired, she took “a seat on one of the little trains drawn by a motor and rode the length of the Zone for it is so far and there is so much walking to do”. The Zone was the large amusement and fun section, seven blocks long, at the eastern end of the Exposition. That little “motor train” was one of the ‘Fadgl’ auto trains consisting of open, passenger-carrying trailers pulled by an open, single-person truck cab. Those “trains” were allowed to travel on the streets throughout the length and breadth of the Exposition’s grounds. Thus, they had an immense advantage in competition with the Overfair Railroad, which was restricted to the northern perimeter along the bay front.

The only other method of transportation she mentions is her using a “motor chair” one day after she had been injured by falling off a San Francisco street car. The “motor chair” was a battery-powered, electric, three-wheel chair driven by one of the passengers. This conveyance was also more profitable than MacDermot’s trains. Perhaps Laura Ingalls Wilder was so tired out by the long train ride from their final “Little House” in Mansfield, Missouri to Oakland/San Francisco that she didn’t want to use any locomotive-driven train at the Fair.

The book is a collection of letters written by Laura Ingalls Wilder to her husband back home while she was in San Francisco. Its title is *West from Home, Letters of Laura Ingalls Wilder, San Francisco 1915*. (pp. 35 and 116)

(The “motor trains”, also called “elephant trains”, were built in south Oakland by B. F. Fageol. His company developed a line of commercial trucks that were sold for many years. The company was later bought by the Peterbilt truck company.)

Photographs from a Ferroequinologist

A set of seven excellent, black and white photographs of runs by engines 1912, 1913, and 502 have been found among Al Smith’s collections.

They were taken during runs for the Northern California Railroad Club in September 1992. The photographer was Richard Mitchell of El Granada, a member of the club and a first-rate photographer of railroading. After I contacted him by phone, he sent a unique note card, in which he describes himself as a “Ferroequinologist” with this prose:

“There’s not a train I wouldn’t take,
No matter where It’s going!”

The photographs, which are of professional quality, will be displayed in Al’s caboose. Richard wrote “Al Smith was a good friend to me, as I think he was to everyone who knew him, and I will be glad to help with photos if I can”. Thanks, Richard, for your photos and comments.

The term “ferroequinologist” intrigued me for some time. Finally, my memories of high school Latin revived enough to suggest this translation, with the aid of dictionaries:

ferro - from “ferrum”, iron

equino - from “equinus”, an adjective from “equus”, horse

-logist - from the Greek “logos”, which, as a suffix, took on the meaning of student or specialist.

In the very early 1800’s, the means of locomotion on the original railroads were horses pulling small cars on tracks. When the steam locomotive was introduced, it became popularly known as an “iron horse”. Therefore, a ferroequinologist is a specialist or student of iron horses.