

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD

Number 69

Cal Poly

January 1999

On Track

With your director,

Ed Carnegie



Nineteen ninety-nine has arrived (Happy New Year!), and SPRR started the new year with clear skies, bright stars, and a full moon. Ken McCrary as usual provided his famous hot mulled apple drink. A lot of effort went into this year's run. Fred Vertel and his crew (Doug Debs, Carol Campbell, Linda & Molly Engelman, Bob & Wendy Morehouse) went all out. Colorful lights adorned the turn table area, that set the mood when you arrived and placed a barrier around the turntable pit. The station was decked out in soft colored lights and a string of lights connected the light stands in the picnic area.

A potluck was held in the red house, before the first train ride. The food was delicious and over 50 people attended. The red house was a little crowded but this only added to the enjoyment.

During the course of the evening six train rides were provided using the 1912 with one double header with the 502. Yes I said the 502. Marty and crew worked Wednesday and most of the day Thursday in order to have it ready for the run. All of the modifications seem to be working fine. The overhauled transfer box is quiet for a change; new shifting lever and braking system is working fine, and all the vibration was taken out of the front auxiliary drive unit--thanks to Geoff Tobin. At midnight we discovered that every possible train horn worked quite well.

On the Dec. workday, there was a small but very hard working crew present. In between a drizzle or two the crossing by the cabooses was rebuilt and aligned. This is a temporary fix, but will hold us until we are able to make a permanent crossing set in concrete this summer. Thanks go to Tom Vertel, Bob Morehouse, Cosmo DiFrancesco, Hart Fairclough, Andrew Martin, Andy McLean.

The roundhouse crew worked on the 502 with some disappointment as small cracks were found in the transfer case. It was decided to clean up the outside of the case and fill the area with a liquid iron epoxy. Only time will tell whether this Band-Aid fix will work or not. In addition, Tom and I installed a new electric fuel pump on both of the diesel tanks. This will allow us to keep track of the fuel used by all of our equipment. A log has been established and is kept by the telephone in the machine shop. If you use any fuel please fill out the log.

It was also a real treat to have Elmer and Frances back on site after a prolonged absence. All of us are certainly hoping that 1999 will be a better year for both of you.

On Sunday after the workday, there was a board meeting.

Reminder, membership 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 for 1999. A membership form for paying your dues for the coming year will follow in the newsletter, please fill this out--with your signature, and include it with your dues

payment.

Mark your calendars too, for the new year with the second Saturday of every month being the scheduled workdays for Swanton.

Items that will be coming up for the January/February workdays are as follows:

- Track crew will start replacing ties in and around the station.
- Car Barn crew will finish brake conversions on the Keystone cars, and work on plans for a new ballast car.
- Roundhouse crew will be finishing the turntable, and cleanup the interior of the roundhouse.
- Grounds crew will continue sprucing things up.
- A group of students in BioResource and Agricultural Engineering are working on the class project to develop a portable shear and brake to be used in maintenance and construction of cars.
- A bulletin board has been started and finishing touches such as painting and foundation needs to be completed.

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

Hal Hunt	Van Nuys
Leonard Frame	Fresno
Paul Zingg	Arroyo Grande
Ian Hower	Santa Clara
Glen Casey	Atascadero
Bruce Sherman	Alameda
Robert Carlson	San Carlos

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.

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, continue to have our bonds of friendship



PUBLICITY AND EVENT COORDINATION

Mary Ann Carnegie and Fred Vertel

Dates to mark on your calendar:
1999

Sat.	January	09	Workday
Sat.	February	13	Workday
Sat.	March	13	Workday
Sun.	April	04	EASTER
Tue.	April	06	Al Smith's actual birthday
Sat.	April	10	Workday in preparation for Sunday's run
Sun.	April	11	Al Smith Day/Run
Sat.	April	17	Cal Poly Open House
Sat.	May	08	Workday

At the December board meeting discussion continued regarding the possibility of Swanton Pacific RR participating in the 1999 Rail fair in Sacramento. Fred Vertel presented several options to the Sacramento RR Museum as to how we might participate in the event. It was basically decided by the Board that our efforts were best directed towards developing a display at Cal Poly's Open House in April. This is coming faster than we realize and there will be lots to do to get ready for this so start planning and getting ready.

An all points bulletin is still out for any of you that might have photos taken of various events, participants and other Swanton related activities for 1998. See Fred Vertel who is putting together a current historical album for our archives.

For 1999 we would like to have a few outings to interesting railroad functions. If any of you have suggestions please let either Fred or Mary Ann know and maybe we can arrange a family event for all us.

Behind the Throttle



with your President, Bill Engelman

engelman@compuserve.com

Voice: 650.726.6908

Fax: 650.726.7030

We had a fine turnout for our annual New Year's Eve celebration with about 50 people at the pot luck dinner and lots more in attendance during the evening's train rides. We ran the 1912 steam engine and the newly repaired diesel as well. Ken McCrary brought his kettle of delicious hot cider to help us keep warm. Lots of noise was made at midnight by air horns and steam whistles, followed by our first run of the 1999 season.

The January workday saw the beginning of track replacement in the College Park Station area, and the relocation of the switch at the North end of the station. A small, but dedicated crew tried to get as much done as possible while the sun was shining. Bill McNab, Andy McLean, Matt Zemny, Ed, Tom Vertel, the Pratkanis family, and the Engelman family were all represented. It sure does get cold around Swanton this time of year. Sunday we continued where we had left off, and made even more progress in the warmer weather.

Bill McNab made his monthly pilgrimage past the wash outs to the redwood grove to tend to the trees that he has been nurturing, and reports that the trees and the poison oak are both doing quite well. We sure hope to resume train rides to this area once again later this year, stay tuned.

Our new member and Cal Poly alum Bruce Sherman began building our new ballast car over in the car barn, with help from Andy and Fitz. We are looking forward to using this custom designed multi purpose car.

We will have lots of track work to do this year, and lots of ballast to spread.

The highlights of our short December board meeting were:

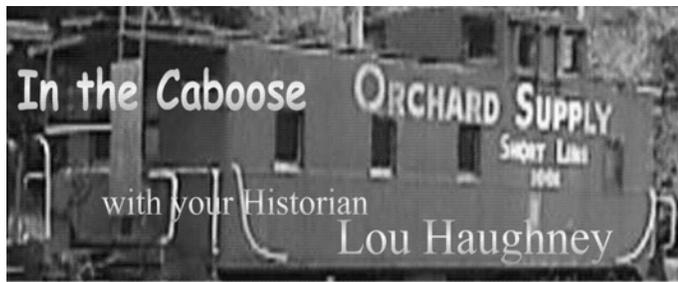
- (1) Railfair -- whereas we had hoped to participate in the upcoming Railfair event in Sacramento, we have determined that we do not have sufficient manpower (people power?) to transport, set up and operate a steam display and do it properly. We may staff an information booth at the event instead, providing information and videos of our operation. We also plan to choose a day when we can go as a group to enjoy the event as spectators. I will let you know the particulars at a later date so you can join us.
- (2) The California State Railroad Museum has expressed a willingness to let us expand the display at the 1915 locomotive in the entrance lobby to include more about our ongoing operation at Swanton. Perhaps museum visitors would like to see these engines actually operating under steam at the Swanton Pacific.
- (3) We had enthusiasm about taking a locomotive to display and operate at Cal Poly in SLO during Cal Poly Days in April. We think this would be a great way to promote the railroad at the University. A live steam display speaks a lot louder than a picture on the internet.
- (4) The concept of taking equipment on the road to events brought up the necessity for a proper means of transportation, Ed Carnegie dusted off his plans for a custom locomotive trailer that he had previously designed. We decided to begin construction as soon as possible. This Saturday we went over the plans and each offered our input to refining the design. This trailer will make it possible to properly and safely transport and display a steam engine at various events in the future.

The next workday will be February 13th. The next board meeting is scheduled for Sunday March 14th, following our Saturday workday.

Have a wonderful New Year

DUES?

What dues?



Recent odds and ends

OVERFAIR RAILWAY PASSES

Warren Miller has sent us two passes for rides on the Overfair Railway at the Panama International Exposition. One is an employee pass for unlimited rides. The other is for a single ride; it is like an ordinary ticket such as movies use. Warren, an SPRS member, now lives in Tracy after many years in the East Bay. Two years ago, Warren sent us photos taken in 1943 when he and two friends rode on the MacDermot's Mountain Lion Railroad at the Alameda County Zoological Gardens, now known as the Oakland Zoo. The passes were given to Warren by a longtime friend, Jim Gibson. Thanks Warren for your continued interest and your contributions to our archives.

ANOTHER REMEMBRANCE OF THE 1913 AT THE OAKLAND ZOO

Cosmo DiFrancesco ran across another reference to someone riding MacDermot's Overfair train at the Oakland Zoo. This reference is in a recent article published in *The International Railway Traveler*, (J u l y 1 9 9 8 i s s u e) . The author, Dennis Cavagnaro of Oakland, wrote a story about a 15-inch gauge train that operates in Coromandel, North Island of New Zealand. In the opening paragraph, he writes: ... as a child I was fascinated by trains. My dad must have been too. ...We [my brother and I] looked forward to visiting the zoo, not so much for the animals, but to ride the 15-inch-gauge [sic] kid-sized train pulled by Louis MacDermot's accurately scaled steamer. Today, one of his locos greets visitors to the California Railway Museum.

...

When contacted by us, Dennis said his father knew McDermot from the latter's operations both at the Panama Pacific International Exposition and at the Oakland Zoo. He was pleased to hear that the McDermot locomotives are now at the Swanton Pacific Railroad as he had been aware only of the 1915 at the CSRM.

E-MAIL FROM ENGLAND

David Mummery of Colchester, England sent an e-mail message in which he asked for information about the Swanton Pacific Railroad. Last summer, he saw the #1915 in the lobby of the California State Railroad Museum and then came to the San Francisco Bay area; but, he could not find any more information about MacDermot's locomotives or about the Swanton Pacific Railroad. Finally, by searching on the internet, he found our website. David is a member of the Narrow Gauge Railroad Society, and he enjoys traveling to miniature railway sites. Now that he has located us, he hopes to return in 1999 just to see our operation!. We will be waiting for you, David. He invites any SPRS member who will visit Great Britain to contact him so that he can provide information on interesting



On Track (Continued from page 2)

grow stronger, and to strive to increase our membership.

With the new year here, and the millennium fast approaching we have lots of ideas and planning to do to help make this and the coming century at Swanton successful.

I would very much like to see more of our members take an active roll in any aspect.

Many of you must know some interesting tidbits about this railroad, Al Smith, or our members -