

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 227

Cal Poly

Apr. May, 2014

### ON TRACK with your Director

I want to start by thanking everyone that helped make the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Al Smith Day a great success, even with the small derail of the locomotive tender & first passenger car. Every one was OK, only a slight bump, & the train came to a stop. Our train crew worked smoothly, put the cars back on the track, & some passengers walked back to the station. Within an hour, gauge bars were installed in the troubled area, & we were back up & running. My sincere thanks goes out to all that helped make the day possible. For the weeks preceding, extra effort was exerted on cleanup, & to make sure the facilities, track & grounds looked & all worked well together; & they certainly did. New attractions included a gnome village, solar butterfly & dragon, along with the new pump-house.

This May we concentrated on track inspection where Lloyd, Mary, Mary Ann, with some help from Randy, Pete & myself, walked & inspected track & every tie by recording each one's location and condition. Then Lloyd & Mary entered the data into an excel spreadsheet for a working record. The following workdays many ties that needed replacing, were, & the wide gauge areas had a gauge bar installed. One problem area, where the soil from the uphill-side was finding its way into the ballast, it was decided to make a ditch on the uphill side so as to better control soil movement. In doing so, one of links on the modified backhoe failed. The machine shop crew of Bruce & Randy, came to the rescue, & produced a replacement part [see "In The Roundhouse"]. This is like so many SPRR projects, i.e., as one solves one problem, something else fails, & a new project is produced, but we at least do make progress.

For the next few work days/weekends the track activity will continue to be a priority until all is done. It is also that time of the year to start thinking about what you would like to do this summer at SPRR, so be sure to check out Fitz's article for several ideas or projects to get involved with. For other details of what is happening . . . read on---

### Down Behind the Railway

With your President, air monkey, & car-barnist.  
Reynold 'Fitz' FitzPatrick  
RGBFitz@aol.com 650.737.9584

My Fellow Swantoons:

I went to the Maker Faire and saw some incredibly talented folks and a lot of whimsy. 3D printing is all the rage and CNC woodworking follows close behind. There were live steam engines, both old and new, Steam-Punk, robotics and Raspberry Pi, the Robo-hand morphed into e-NABLE and so much more. If these, mostly, young folk, are the future, then we are in for a grand ride.

This brings me to our own makers here down behind the railway.

The well used rail-crane engine, surplus circa. 1990, has seen its last days and parts are no longer available. Kyle obtained a diesel engine that might fit and we'd like to see some improvements in the operating controls. This requires a survey and a plan before work starts so it doesn't become an unending project. It could be yours, step right up folks!

I understand the machine shop door project is penciled in for our Summer Camp – see Bruce.

Geoff is still looking for help with the handicap-car and I am still on the 1913's tender project.

As you enter the machine shop there is a white board with various short projects available for anyone looking for work. I'd list them here, but they change rapidly.

Remember Summer Camp and our Open House is coming up at the end of July.

### IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

***DUES-DUES-DUES are now DUE!!!***



Our organization is now accepting new memberships, or renewals for the year 2014. For a mere \$35/year you become a full-fledged Swanton Pacific Volunteer. Dues need to be submitted ASAP.

## Make your check out to Swanton Pacific

**Railroad:** mail to  
Ed Carnegie;  
BRAE Dept. Cal Poly  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407



Track marking after inspection, X replace tie and spot check gauge

## In The Roundhouse

Randy Jones

While our main focus remains the restoration of the 1913, sometimes we must spend time on critical maintenance of our operating equipment. We have been monitoring a bad auxiliary power shaft bearing on the diesel #502 for quite some time. After the New Year, we determined it had to be fixed in order that the unit would be reliable for Al Smith Day. After lifting the back hood off, we found that the shaft itself was worn and loose in the bearing, the bearing mount needed reinforcement, and the belt tensioners were worn out. By the time we were done we had: made new tensioners; adjusted the alignment between shafts and the air compressor and alternator; modified the air compressor mounting plate for easier access and service; fitted new belts; replaced custom-fit radiator hoses; cleaned the radiator of 1/4" of accumulated oily grime and corrected the source of that oil; fixed the leaking air intake; installed a new water temp gauge and sender; replaced worn wiring and hoses, and serviced the air brake valve, as well as several other tasks. We were also able to isolate the worsening problem with the fuel injection pump and governor, and the engine runs much smoother and starts easily now. Our philosophy favors solid, functional and precise repairs over "Swiss watch" extremes, always with an eye toward fixing things so they will last longer. This job kept us away from the 1913 for seven weeks.

In the middle of that work, our new pressurized irrigation system sprang a leak. When I fixed that, I

was also able to move some components in the pump shed and gain more space for picnic equipment storage.

Most recently, the freshly repaired Bomb Car Backhoe broke some other parts. We fabricated some more robust replacements, and the car is back in service.

Fitz has begun working on the 1913's tender frame, concentrating first on the air brakes. Also, Geoff and Tony have diagnosed the electrical problems on our diesel air compressor. Quite a bit of re-wiring was necessary, and we now have a good running unit for the track crew tie-tamping gang.

We are now back to work on the 1913. The cab is just about ready to go out for paint, and the turret is back on the boiler. Layout work on the Johnson Bar (reverse lever) mount is done, but the Reach



Repaired link on modified backhoe

Rod that connects the Johnson Bar to the valve gear needs some alignment. We're all glad to be making progress again! Thanks to all for your support!

## UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

*Mary Ann Carnegie*

June 14/15	work weekend/ Sunday=Father's Day!
June 28/29	work weekend
July 12/13	work weekend
July 26/27	work weekend
<b>July 28-Aug. 3</b>	<b>SUMMER CAMP</b>
<b>Aug. 2</b>	<b>SATURDAY-Open House/Run</b>
Aug. 23/24	work weekend

SPRR has just completed its twentieth Al Smith Day and we can almost feel like we are similar to the US Postal Service in that NOTHING keeps us from delivering a successful event—"neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed" and now even a derailment! Swanton volunteers are awesome in handling situations under



any condition to “gitt’r” done! A huge THANKS goes to all that helped in all capacities—parking, cooking, sales, serving, train crew, hosting, cleanup, etc. etc.—many compliments were heard throughout the day and long afterwards. Now to plan for next year, but first let’s work together on our other upcoming events!!

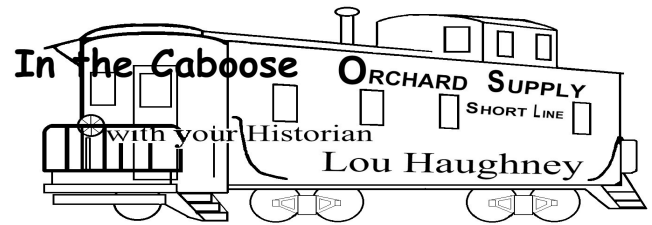
Summer officially begins, June 21, & with that we look towards SPRR’s Summer Camp Week, July 26-Aug. 3. This work-week offers volunteers the opportunity to work on projects that may require more than a few hours or a typical work weekend. Sat., Aug. 2, closes the camp week with an Open House Run Day. This is the organization’s opportunity to showcase, and try to gain new volunteers as we host on a smaller, more personal basis, the joys of being a SPRR volunteer. Remember the continuation of this organization relies deeply on our gaining future supporters. We want the history and life of the Overfair RR to continue, and to stay at Swanton—but volunteers are constantly needed to keep it going. So we are seeking suggestions for names of groups &/or individuals, and ask that you provide me their addresses to send an invite. Please do this ASAP; invites are going out by the end of this month.

For Summer Camp we will have access to the Red-house, but will definitely need to know who is coming when and for how long. We will also be asking individuals to sign up for preparing a dinner for at least one night of their being there. No one will be the chief maid, cook and bottle washer for the whole week—that task will be equally shared by all. A sign-up schedule will be sent out later to better help organize the week.

Until then—we still have the three-scheduled work weekends prior to Summer Camp. Facilities for those overnight stays **will be** limited to rougher types of camping accommodations. Educational classes, a major mission of Cal Poly, are being offered for Cal Poly students and other groups here at Swanton, so most housing facilities, at Swanton, will be used for that purpose.

All for now, but look forward to seeing, visiting, sharing good times and laughs with all of you soon at Swanton’s paradise.

*Swanton Pacific Railroad Society Nametags are available from Bob Wilkinson, [wilkie@pacbell.net](mailto:wilkie@pacbell.net) Please contact him for new or replacements cards.*



## MORE ABOUT THE OVERFAIR RAILWAY’S MAIN YARD

In a recent article about the Overfair Railway’s main yard, I concluded with the statement, “Another uncertainty to be discussed in a future article is whether or not the turntable was completed in time to be used during the Exposition”. That speculation elicited strong replies from a few readers. As a result of those reactions, I reexamined more thoroughly the pertinent photos in our archives. As a result, I am now reassured that the turntable was in use during the Exposition. The attached photos show clearly that the turntable was a vital part of the operations.

Figure 1 is an extract from the panorama photo by Cardinell-Vincent that shows the Overfair trains and crews (The original panorama photo is displayed in the Al Smith caboose.) The legend at the bottom lists the photo’s date, “Oct. 18, 1915”, two months before the Exposition closed. The remaining attachments, although undated, demonstrate clearly that the turntable was completed.

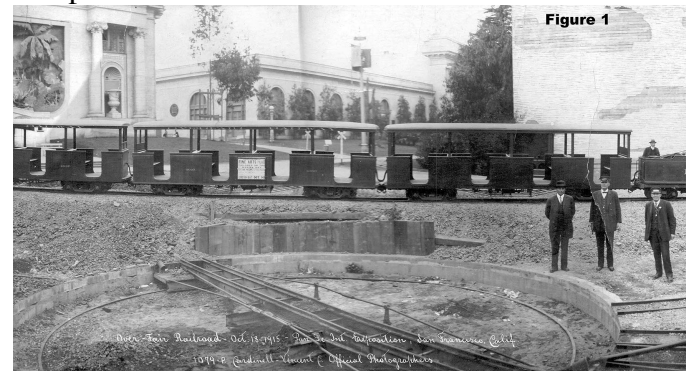


Figure 1 SPRS 1913-1915 IMM-0042ex. Legend at bottom Reads: Over-Fair Railroad – Oct. 18, 1915 – Pan. Pa. Int. Exposition, San Francisco, Calif. 1079-p Cardinell-Vincent Official Photographers

Figure 2 is an interesting scene. Locomotive no. 1914 is on the turntable. Adjacent to the turntable is a ticket booth. Note the track in front of the Panama Canal Building. Could that track be part of the Overfair’s trackage? Another unusual feature is the scarcity of people.

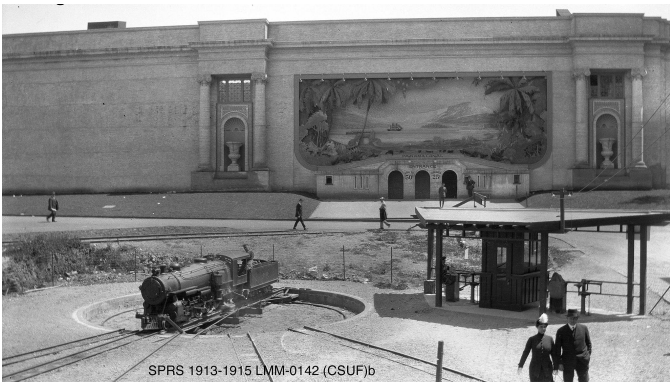


Figure 2: No. 1912 on turntable in main yard.  
Panama Canal Bldg. in background

The scene in figure 3 adjoins that of figure 2 although, apparently, at an earlier day. Two tracks come out of the lower right hand corner. One track curves to the east near the turntable. The second track curves to west around the southeast corner of the Machinery Palace. That latter track leads to the terminus shown in figure 5. The track in front of the Panama Canal building is not prominent in an enlargement of Figure 3; however, what seems to be a pile of rails lies in front of the building's entrance. All of that suggests photo no. 3 was taken earlier than photo no. 2.

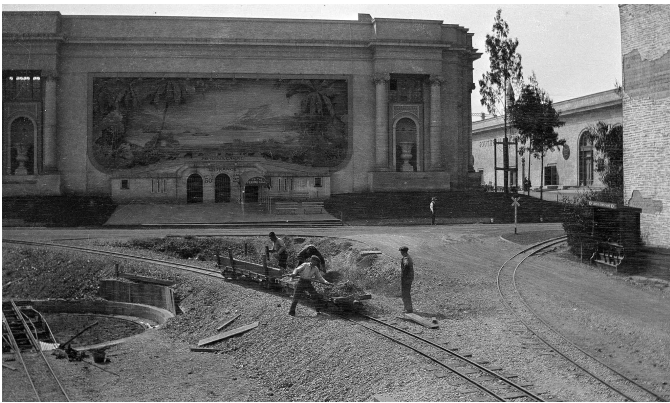


Figure 3 SPRS 1913-1915 Lmm-0148: Track layout at South end of main yard. Turntable at front left; Panama Canal Bldg. In left-center background, So. Pacific RR Bldg. In far right background; SE edge of Machinery Palace at right

The double-header locomotives in figure 4 are on the left-hand track of figure 3. The right-hand track that goes around the Machinery's corner is evident through the smoke at the front of the second engine.



Figure 4: 1913-1915 LMM-0108: Double-heading locomotives coming out of the left-hand (East) wye arm onto the outbound main track. Right-hand (West) arm of wye visible between the locomotives

The last photo, figure 5, depicts a fully loaded train at the end-of-track on the south side of the Machinery Palace. If this is a terminus, what then was the procedure for transferring the train onto the outbound track along the east side of the Machinery Palace?

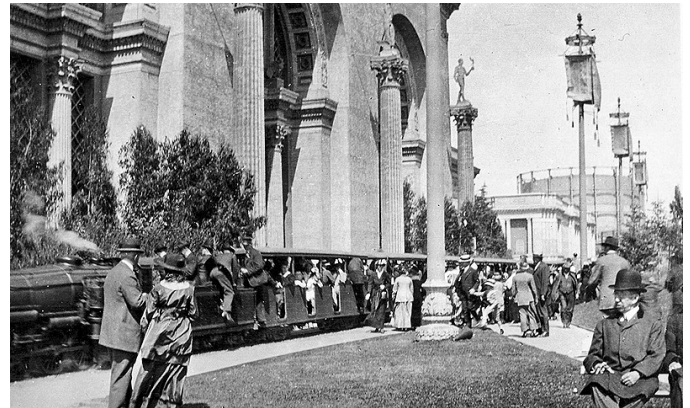


Figure 5: 1913-1915: LMM\_0225: Passengers boarding Overfair train at the end-of-track on the Machinery Palace's South side. Overfair Rwy's main yard is off to the left beyond the Mach. Place, and Pan. Canal Bldgs off to right.

So, solving one problem just leads to more puzzling questions. As always, comments and suggestions regarding such questions are welcome. Thanks to all who keep me on the right track.

## Additional Newsletter Notes

[Can be submitted by any SPRR Volunteer]

This section of the newsletter will be for any volunteer to submit an article, editorial, or other information they would like to share with all.

### The 2014 newsletter schedule is as follows:

June  
August

October  
December



Any ideas or article that a volunteer wishes to submit **MUST** be submitted by the 20<sup>th</sup> of month's listed above in order to be published in that newsletter.  
[Schedule is per Board approval—Feb. 9, 2014]

## Newsy updates:

### Vasona Junction Train Register Booth Restoration Begins

*By Lloyd and Mary Yoshida*

On Memorial Day weekend, restoration began on the train register booth. The left exterior was partially removed and shored up with plywood. The rear exterior was removed and replaced with new redwood boards. The original left foundation beam, a used railroad tie with rusted spikes, was completely rotted out and was replaced with new redwood. Removal of the soffits revealed a carpenter bee nest, a rat's nest and two squirrel nests. Even in retirement, it provided a home for the woodland critters. The redwood used in the project was grown on the ranch and milled by the Swanton Woods Unit. Much more work is still needed with foundation on the other three sides, new window frames, new batons, new rafter supports and a new front door to replicate the original. Anyone have a 1920's hand crank phone? Follow the project in the photos below.



Original left foundation beam with spikes



Squirrel's nest in soffit

See the Jan-Feb 2013 Newsletter In the Caboose article by Lou Haughney for the history of the train register booth.

## Swanton Trees

Robert is continually maintaining the railroad's Ag. Tourism Project--Christmas Trees. He shaves, shears, and shapes them up to have them ready for December's harvesting. While he maintains these trees, Mother Nature wreaks havoc via strong winds and knocks other trees [alders] down. Course Al always called these Alders—just weeds.

One evening, after a workday, as we gathered round for social hour we all heard creaks and cracks, followed by a fairly loud kaboom. So we then ask, if no one is in the forest when a tree falls, can it still be heard? Several of us would probably say yes to this, after hearing the loud crashing sound. Pete then discovered the next day two fallen trees. This past week Kyle discovered another fallen tree just opposite Martha's Garden. The winds have been blowin' and knockin' trees down, thus providing a good supply of woodchips and future firewood.



Original front



Original left side



Left side Removed



Back with new redwood



SPRR Christmas tree field