ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie

I would like to report to all that were, and those of you that were not able to attend the 22nd Al Smith Day, it was a great and most successful day. All who attended seemed to have had a wonderful time, including a large contingent of relatives and personal friends of Al Smith, making it even more special for many of us. The weather was perfect, the Fiddle Road Band continues to provide exceptional background music; Cal Poly’s Logging Team with their active display always attracts the crowd; OSH Calendar artist, Ken Muramoto personally signed many calendars; antique Model A’s in primo condition provided a wonderful display for all to view. And last, but not least we thank the ranch staff for their educational display showcasing the ranch, their offering of tours, and the learn by doing lassoing of the metal calf—horse—always a hit with the public.

For our members that did attend I want to thank you for your support. It was so rewarding to have attendees come up to me and say how impressed they were about all that was going on, the improvements made, and how well maintained the railroad’s facilities looked. With Mr. Stetson’s great-grandson attending Al Smith Day, he tipped his hat to us. With the sell-out crowd it was even more amazing to see how smooth everything went and without any glitches—we all stayed on track. IT WAS GREAT TEAMWORK! Especially when we see how our parking volunteers handled all the vehicles.

The success of the day did not come just on the day of the event however. We know that so many of our volunteers put in hours of their time to come over to Swanton on other weekends and days to help get everything ready. Lots of track work was accomplished under the direction of Pete and Randy. They were successful in getting the wye completed. Al Smith Day was the first time we have been able to have the steam locomotive and our public guests ride that section since last winter. Robert installed new wiring for a much improved PA system in and around College Station. While Kyle and Ernie maintained and improved the picnic area with mowing, fertilizing the lawns, flower beds, washing of the lamps, station, and spreading woodchips around the picnic tables to keep the dust and weeds under control and help bring better uniformity to the entire area and the somewhat uneven ground levels. Other tasks taken care of by the many volunteers on our regularly scheduled workdays likewise contributed to the overall success of Al Smith Day.

Cal Poly provided meat for the Swanton BBQ. It was delicious!

Photo by Max Sheehan

I also would like to bring to everyone’s attention that Chris Taylor has now volunteered to be the newsletter’s editor. We are most grateful for his taking on this task. So at anytime any of you wish to submit articles, photos, constructive suggestions,
or other information that would be of interest to all, please contact Chris at: taylorfct@gmail.com

As the editor transition is now in effect, I hope you also recall that per the last newsletter where all were informed of the transitioning of the Swanton Pacific Railroad Directorship. Currently Charlie Crabb and I are functioning as co-directors. As time goes on, I will carry less and less, and Charlie will be taking on more and more of the Director’s responsibilities. Stay tuned.

We still have lots of projects planned that need completion. With the summer months, longer daylight hours, and two work weekends scheduled each month [2nd and 4th weekends] from now through September, along with summer camp, and Cal Poly Day scheduled for Oct. 9—I look forward to sharing in all the fun times together with you at Swanton Pacific.

Ed

**Down Behind the Railway**

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

My Fellow Swantoons:
Overwhelmed by guests and underwhelmed by volunteers – and you made Al Smith Day seem like business as usual. Pat yourselves on the back!!

The major projects for this year are to put the 1913 in service, get the 1912 back to Wasatch for a new boiler, track work, more track work, and a little more track work, restore the MacDermot and Keystone cars (We could have used two more cars on Al Smith Day, almost every train was full), finish setting up the tree nursery, and building a railcar test stand.

We plan on contracting out some of the facility repair and maintenance jobs such as reroofing the roundhouse. Other infrastructure repairs, especially in the machine shop, we will do in-house as time permits.

If you would like a plastic name tag please contact Marty. They are about $10.00 each with a magnet rather than a pin to hold them in place.

On May 14th the University will provide Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) training, please contact Ed if you wish to attend.

In addition to the project above there are several projects that need a champion. These are projects that have been on the ‘Honey-dew’ list for some time but are not critical for the operation but sure would make life easier while working down behind the railway.
- Catalog the casting patterns we have on hand.
- Make, or purchase, cabinets to hold the patterns in the Cal Barn. We need to catalog them first to see how much cabinet space is needed.
- Cabinets in the Cal Barn for display and preservation of historical items.

In the Machine Shop:
- Build a stub wall to hold the AED, medicine cabinet, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and such.
- Install the ventilation fan.

At the Station:
- Add an additional gate in the fence by the water tower to facilitate egress from the north end of trains, a wide gate like the one at the south end. We may wish to move the handi-car to the north end of the consist.
- Build a podium that resembles the end of an Observation car end for speakers at events.
- Repair the bottoms of various support posts at the station and eliminate the discontinuity between the pavers and the station platform.
- Refinish the benches at the station.

**Down at Julio:**
- Replace or repair the gate to the tree field.
- Extend the height of the fence to restrict venison on the hoof.
- Finish plumbing the irrigation system – see Robert.

In the Car Shop:
- The handi-car needs help installing the counter weight and repair to the locking mechanisms. See Fitz or Geoff.
- Build a new work car. See Pete.
- Rebuild braking systems for the Keystone car trucks.

There are more things on the list, additionally you will see posted in the machine shop ‘suddenly critical’ and ‘Oh we need…’ items available for you to make your own.

We also need a filing clerk to keep us organized.

Our Summer Camp is the last full week in July and we hope to qualify some more conductors and engineers, be there if you can. Saturday the 30th we will host an open house and hopefully gain some new members.

Come on down or over or up – we’ll have fun.
Teach and learn alike.

Fitz
Yours in “training”

As this is written, we are finishing preparations for Al Smith Day. Since the New Years run, there has been a tremendous amount of energy spent by Pete and the track gang on the Folger wye. Although not finished, the wye is now serviceable, and we will be running passenger trains in the “traditional” manner turning the engine at the wye. A great many new ties were installed, and significant re-alignment done to eliminate sharp spots in the curves. Service was performed on the switches which were rusted tight, and weld repairs made to the Daffodil lift-out-span, where rusting had heaved up the rail and broken some welds. This is just typical of the kinds of defects we find and repair during our track inspections. A great deal of routine maintenance remains, so call Pete if you want to join the SPRR Gym Club.

The 1913 has her cab base permanently installed, and Fitz has been working on the tender. The original water tank shell and new stainless steel liner tank have been fitted up, not an easy task since the two fit so tightly, and the old tank must be raised and lowered again for each adjustment. The motor car is in San Jose, where a friendly shop is working to iron out the problems with the engine. Much of the work is pro bono, and we hope to avoid buying a new replacement. The fuel injection pump on the 502 has always been difficult to check for oil level, owing to the placement of the shut-off cable. New brackets were made and the cable relocated so we can check the oil without needing to dismantle anything.

Your shop forces have been working to get the blue Marketeer electric truck running again for Al Smith Day. The charger ruined the batteries by over-charging them, and the leaked battery acid began corroding the body. We have purchased a new, very reliable charger and a new set of golf cart batteries. The body has been needle-scaled, cleaned and painted, and installation of the batteries and charger is under way. We are working hard to have this done for the run, as this little truck does a lot of work for our volunteers hauling picnic materials up and down the hill for the picnic.

We are looking forward to a safe and fun event, and thank all of you for your encouragement and support. Randy

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

Upcoming events at Swanton, mark your calendars:
May 14-15  Work Weekend [14-AED Training]
May 28-29  Work Weekend
June 11-12  Work Weekend
June 25-26  Work Weekend-Board Mtg. on 26th
July 9-10  Work Weekend
July 23-31  Summer Camp & family run day

WOW!! What a most successful 22nd Al Smith Day with a sell out crowd!! And we even stayed on track with having Cal Poly’s President Armstrong present. This is just an inside joke as some might recall that last year when he came, we unfortunately had a slight derailment, with him on board. All
jokes aside, we are ALWAYS honored to have him and his wife attend. With the entire new track work completed this year, nothing but successes reigned throughout the day in all aspects. It was also especially nice to again have Cal Poly Alumni BBQer Max Sheehan and Crew cook nothing but Cal Poly meats—tri-tip and sausage for our guests. We were also very pleased to have former long time volunteer Jim Matheny helping out again with the successful BBQ.

Thank you to all Swanton Volunteers & Ranch Staff.

Al Smith Day was a GREAT success. All due to each of you and your efforts given over the past several months. There is always lots of prep work that needs to take place—some very highly visible, and other efforts done behind the scenes that often may seem to go unnoticed, but it ALL comes through loud and clear on an event day. The teamwork exemplified by everyone makes everything run smoothly, and we just want to thank all of you for everything. Without you it just wouldn’t happen.

Again we thank you very very much.

Ed and Mary Ann

We are now moving forward with getting ready for the upcoming months. Plans will be finalized soon on what audience we wish to specifically target for the upcoming summer work camp family day run. Suggestions gladly accepted. Till then . . .

We always enjoy showcasing the grounds and facilities, along with offering tours and the history of the Swanton Pacific Railroad to any guests visiting. We recognize many of our volunteers graciously promote Swanton, the volunteering possibilities offered by the railroad and the organization’s mission both on site and off. We are always looking for volunteers, and we thank you all for making no one feel like a stranger.

Reminder: we now meet on the second full weekend of each month, along with the fourth weekend. So come up, down, over, or around to be a part of it all, on any part or even both of the two offered weekends, and maybe even take “pride in ownership” of a project or two.

We also ask if you do participate, for whatever amount of time, please remember to sign the work-log. If you are staying over on one of the Saturday workdays—we do offer rooms at the inn, just confirm with Ed. Availability for the summer months may be limited. Group dinners are usually planned for Saturday nights. Anyone staying can volunteer to be the chef that evening to prepare their culinary specialty. A donation of $5.00 is usually asked in order to help defray meal costs.

For additional 2016 dates/schedules, go to:

sprr.calpoly.edu

then click on calendar/membership form.

by Todd James Pierce
Disney History Institute

Years before Disneyland, Walt briefly explored the idea of using trains to offer guests a brief tour of his animation studio in Burbank.

Though the idea had likely been percolating for a while, the concept was brought into play in 1948.

That spring he traveled up to see the privately owned Wildcat Railroad in Los Gatos, California. The Wildcat was a one-third-scale railroad run by Billy Jones, a northern Californian railroad man, who had set it up mainly for children. On select weekends, he operated the train free-of-charge, accepting only donations from families wishing to venture out on his ranch. Something in this set up intrigued Walt, a train with enough track to transform a simple ride into a small-scale scenic adventure.
Walt was interested enough to ask if Jones might help him acquire a steam engine and rolling stock of his own. “Personally,” Walt added in a letter, “I envy you for having the courage to do what you want.” At the time, Jones had either just bought—or was in the process of buying—multiple one-third scale engines and cars from the estate of an eccentric rail fan, Louis Mac Dermot who had once managed the scenic train operation at the 1915 Pan Pacific Exposition and subsequently at the Alameda County Zoo in Oakland. Jones promised to keep Walt in his thoughts.

A few weeks later Walt received a wire that Billy Jones knew where Walt could buy a one-third-scale engine for $2,500. Like the one Jones operated, it was an amusement train, once operated at a local zoo, not a backyard model, and would require a sizeable piece of land, like the studio, to layout a track course. Walt considered the idea for a while, but ultimately decided to pass: he was busy with other things that year, most notably returning the studio to full feature-length animation with *Cinderella*.

**This article first appeared in a Disney History Institute podcast at:**

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**THE LARGER THAN LIFE ALBERT B. SMITH**
by Rhoda Fry

When guests come to the railroad for a major event, they are greeted by a larger than life figure on painted plywood of a warm-hearted man wearing overalls, a denim work coat, and a green Swanton Pacific Railroad hat. This is of course Al Smith, founder of the Swanton Pacific Railroad who also donated the land on which it runs, the 3200-acre Swanton Pacific Ranch, to Cal Poly SLO in 1993. So how did this statue come to be?

**Al’s statue was commissioned in 2005 so that our guests would have a chance to “meet” Al and get an idea as to what he was like. The artwork might look familiar to locals who drive past farms along highways 101 and 68 where “giant people” participate in the agricultural landscape. Swanton Pacific Railroad volunteers Ed and Mary Ann Carnegie admired these “giant people” every time they drove to Mary Ann’s mother’s home in Salinas. The Carnegies thought, wouldn’t a larger-than-life Al Smith be perfect for the railroad? The other railroad volunteers heartily agreed and Mary Ann’s mom even knew how to contact the artist, John Cerney. So Ed and Mary Ann visited John, described Al’s personality and provided ten years’ worth of photographs of Al. A composite of the photos was the result—although a typical birthday...**

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Walt Disney visits Billy Jones at his Los Gatos Wildcat Railroad as Walt considers trains for his upcoming Disneyland Park

Family with Al Smith Statue
libation was not included particularly because by then the railroad was on a “dry” university site. When you visit the railroad for Al’s birthday celebration (Al Smith Day), you’ll just have to imagine him with a birthday beer in hand. The larger-than-life Al Smith was dedicated on “Al Smith Day,” April 10, 2005 and Al’s nieces, nephews, and other family members gathered for a family photograph with the statue. It was then that we all knew John Cerney got it right!

About the artist John Cerney: In addition to Al Smith, Cerney has installed portraits of celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe, the 1948 Artichoke Queen, at the National Steinbeck Center; James Dean on California Highway 46; and Amelia Earhart in Atchison, Kansas. On Monterey’s Cannery Row, you’ll find murals that immortalize the characters of John Steinbeck’s Cannery Row. John Cerney has caught the eye of journalists locally and nationwide in publications such as The Monterey Herald, The Monterey County Weekly, The San Jose Mercury News, SF Weekly, The Californian, The New York Times, The Sioux City Journal, and the Christian Science Monitor. You can learn more about artist John Cerney at his website: http://www.johncerneymurals.com/index.html

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

DUES-DUES-DUES are now DUE!!!

Our organization is ALWAYS accepting new memberships. Dues or membership renewals for the year 2016, are definitely due ASAP. For a mere $35/year you become a full-fledged Swanton Pacific Volunteer.

Make your check out to Swanton Pacific Railroad; mail to:

Ed Carnegie;
BRAE Dept. Cal Poly
San Luis Obispo, CA  93407

NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTERS

Lee Martin Howell  San Mateo, CA
David J. Mussatti  Incline Village, CA
Steve Restivo  San Jose, CA
John Stettler  Jackson, CA
Stephen Westrate  San Jose, CA
Kelley FitzPatrick  San Jose, CA
Charlie Crabb  San Luis Obispo, CA

On behalf of the entire organization, we welcome you into our “train family” & we certainly look forward to seeing you at some of our next events. Many of our supporters may not recognize you right away, so please introduce yourselves so that we can get to better know you & vice versa.