

SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 222

Cal Poly

May.-June. 2013

ON TRACK with your Director

Ed Carnegie:

I am very happy and proud to report that the annual 19th Al Smith Day was a great success. My sincere thanks goes out to all that made the day possible. For the weeks preceding, extra effort was exerted on clean-up, and to make sure the facilities looked and worked well, and they did. Mary Ann will cover Al Smith Day under events.

The month of May was a catch-up day where most of the activities were in the shops. A point of interest, Vera dropped Andy off for the day on their visit to California, and Andy worked with Pete on the newly acquired electric truck. Fitz, worked on the 1913 tender, and the Fry family [Bill, Rhoda and Justin] worked on a retaining wall by the bridge. On Monday, May 13, we offered a train ride and the use of College Station to the California Beef Cattle Improvement Association on their Central Coast visit this year. Thanks go to Pete, Randy, Robert and John for handling this. The second work weekend in May, Fitz and crew concentrated on the 1913 tender; Pete and I tried a test plot on the lawn with a selective weed spray to try to control burr clover and it worked.

On Saturday, June 8, we had an interesting experience assisting a Cal Poly student in his senior project and the Boy Scouts of America. A train ride and Swanton history was shared with all.

During the second work weekend in June, the inside of the 1913 tender was painted and more progress was made on the 1913. The tender tank shell got sandblasted by John House, Fitz, and Ken McCrary. Fitz got two coats of waterproof coating applied to the inside.

Several tests have been run on improving or modifying oil burner and spot firing, and with some direction from Don Micheletti's design of his cylindrical burner, we will be incorporating this design into our own system. Much experience and knowledge has been obtained in this learning process, as was the same for Fitz in getting the 1913's air pump up and running efficiently on air.

Pete and I worked on trying to improve the watering of the lawn and met with some success.

Over the last six months the Cal Poly Environmental Health and Safety Office has been working with us and the ranch to meet the Federal and County of Santa Cruz requirements for a Spill Prevention Control Countermeasure [SPCC] Program. It is reaching completion and will provide us with a plan and training program so that we know what needs to be done.

A blast from the past: we received this from Clinton Barr re: our congrats on his recent commission ceremony as 2nd Lt. in the US ARMY

"Thank you very much!! I would like to come back to Swanton, but it might be a while! I leave this Friday for training and a minimum of 7 years active duty after that. I do not foresee myself being in California for that period given there are no active army bases. But who knows! There have been so many twists, turns and unexpected results already. I hope all is well with you. Thank you for all the mentoring, warm nights and dinners in the trailer during my time at Swanton. Swanton and everyone there helped me through high school, college and it will continue helping me. I am forever grateful for my experience and I hope many other kids are getting the same. When all is said and done, I wish to have a 5th wheel and work at Swanton, be one of the old timers"

Down Behind the Railway

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

My Fellow Swantoons:

The lazy days of summer are ahead of us, however at Swanton the only thing that is lazy is the "S" in our logo. We have a long list of projects that have been awaiting some champion among us to step up and make them their own. Most of them have been around for years and keep getting pushed down on the list as more pressing tasks have taken precedence.

We have reduced the workload on our members by contracting out some of the facilities work, such as roof repair, where possible to allow members to concentrate on railroad 'stuff' (a technical term) as opposed to 'household' work which we can do at home.

As with other volunteer groups we are experiencing a reduction in membership of younger folk. It seems to be a sign of the times with both adults in a family having to work thus vacating the volunteer positions in our communities that used to be filled by the non-working spouse; e.g. Friends of the Library.

OK – I know the non-working spouse did, and does, a lot of work; they just didn't get a paycheck. In addition to making a home they invested time, money, and knowledge in the social fabric of our communities and set an example for their children and others. Enough said.

Our Society is an operating museum of the technology of a hundred years ago when steam was King and electricity and the automobile were new-fangled fads that may not last. We also have the advantage of working in a scale that is large enough to see without a magnifying glass and small enough that we don't need industrial equipment. This not to say that we reject modern means of fabrication and maintenance, but rather that we use our current knowledge and resources to maintain equipment that was built to tolerances of not less than 1/64th of an inch and usually 1/32nd. We have safety standards unheard of a hundred years ago but were written in blood over the years, and codes and regulations that protect ourselves and our guests.

Following is a list of projects that you, or a friend, could make your own and get your name in

the newsletter. You can also be anonymous in your endeavors if you don't want the world to know you are having fun, we respect that.

RAILROAD STUFF (That technical term again)

Keystone cars: finish rehabilitation of the skeleton on track 3.

The plumbing and decking have been completed, the siding, seats, roof, and clerestory windows need to be fabricated and the wiring for lights, speaker, and braking need to be installed in the roof. There is a little more to this project, if you want this as yours, please let me know, as we will have to order wood and other materials. It is mostly a wood working project at this point as well as being an education in the construction of a railcar.

Tobin's Keystone brake foundation plan.

Keystone Light rail trucks came with brake system that did not match ours, nor did it match the tonnage of the cars. Geoff designed a plan that adequately addresses these issues and all we have to do now is build twelve of them. If you are a welder this could be your project as we have all the parts except the service chambers which are bolted on. We expect as a truck is upgraded it will be swapped with one in service until all are replaced.

Rail Crane Brakes.

The rail crane trucks are unique, and at this time only one truck has an operational hand brake. The Tobin plan adapted to these trucks will solve that problem. As it is the rail crane is functional but not optimal.

Railcar test stand.

The passenger cars all have the brake hoses mounted high allowing the brake connections to be made above the coupler whereas it is iffy with the maintenance of way (MOW) cars. Even so, the screwed pipe connections are subject to abuse and misalignment causing a degree of frustration when making up a consist. We want to build a test stand at the end of the inspection track that replicates the end of a standard car so we may ensure hoses and wires are correctly aligned. The test stand will also have air to simulate brake application and power to simulate the operation of electrical systems. Basically it will look like the end of a railcar with a

coupler and various connections. This would likely take two days to build and install.

Passenger car annual inspection.

With the test stand completed we can pull each car up and inspect its operation and components. Well, even if the test stand isn't there we can still inspect each car. We really have little operation of passenger cars during the year so an annual inspection is adequate as a brake test is made each time an engine is coupled to a consist. This is an opportunity to learn all the component parts of a railcar, trucks, brake foundation and the nomenclature.

Handy-cap car counter weight.

The handy-cap car, built as a Senior Project at Cal Poly, has been a great benefit to our operation allowing guests in wheel chairs to experience the ride to Folger and back. We discovered that it sorely needed a counter weight to the lift mechanism to balance the car and so placed in several short lengths of heavy rail in the car. It was observed that the original passenger openings on the off side constituted a potential problem should a wheel chair slip sideways. While the openings are smaller than a wheel chair and would not allow a chair, or our guest, to fall out we believe that the off side openings should be closed and the closure should incorporate the counter weight. Geoff calculated that a 1/4" steel plate sandwiched between two plywood panels would resolve this problem as well as being cosmetically pleasing and allow removal of the chunks of iron sitting below the seats.

I would guess that this project would take two or three days to complete; remove the off side center section, install the steel sandwich, and paint to match. Sounds like lignumtechnic to me and it could be yours.

Build arch bar freight trucks.

Passenger car truck parts, we have scads. What we don't have is a supply of arch bar trucks. All our passenger trucks have swinging bolsters which provide a smoother ride for passengers when traversing curves. Arch bar trucks are more appropriate for freight and work cars and we only have a few. The ones we started creating used journal boxes made up of weldments as were the

columns and spring plank retainers. If you are a welder, grinder, cutter this is a project for you.

Electric brake switch installation.

You may know that the Big Boys use triple valves and negative air to operate their brakes, heck I understand some now use radio commands. We use straight air, that is to say to apply the brakes we apply air pressure to the brake cylinders just like you step on the brake pedal in your car and apply hydraulic pressure to the brakes. On the Big Stuff if a train breaks apart the drop in air pressure causes the brakes to apply! That's what the triple valve is all about. While they travel at 70 plus MPH we travel at 10MPH on a good day and straight track. They can stop in about a mile and if they go on the ground cars are scattered all over the place. If we go on the ground we come to stop within a foot or so, not mass or velocity. While we are in 'revenue service' (we actually do not have 'revenue service' because that requires revenue, but the term is consistent with railroad practice—we're in passenger service) the only breakaway we could have could be controlled by the conductor applying the hand brake on his car.

It is while we are making up a consist that a unattended car might breakaway and Randy, retired electrician he is, has designed an electric brake switch that replicates the function of a triple valve giving us an additional level of safety. I only know of one car that got away in the last twenty years and we only had to go and couple up and bring it back.

This is an involved project first requiring a test board and a complicated plumbing process. Most of the work will be done with either tube or hose due to the constraints of our smaller size equipment. Come talk with Randy or me as we will have to order parts and pieces.

North Station Semaphore.

Are you a super TIG welder? The new sheet metal panels for the semaphore are too short by 3/8th of an inch. Attempting to weld on an extension has not worked, come see me and I'll cry on your shoulder. The question becomes is there anyone who can weld up the extensions or should we just try and find a vendor who can form the corners we need? We haven't had much luck so far. If you think you have a solution to our dilemma please see me or Pete.

That's the railroad stuff; the equipment below is in support of the railroad:

Crawler repair.

Our little bulldozer seems to have lost a woodruff key so the crank shaft pulley doesn't pull and the water pump doesn't pump and I guess the pistons don't whatever it is they do. I haven't had my hands on this one so your guess is as good as mine. Do you want a challenge?

Ingersoll Rand air compressor.

Another gift. A few years ago we determined that the engine worked fine and the air compressed while holding a "button", whatever that means. My guess is that the unloader is glued in place. (FitzPatrick's axiom: 90% of mechanical problems are caused by crud, e.g. dirt, corrosion, rust, gunk.)

All the documentation is missing; the rating plates are corroded beyond legibility and the only indication of what it is is Ingersoll Rand on the end and "100" over "47" on one side.

This would be a lovely addition to our MOW department if operational with hi-rollers as the tampers work so much better easing the strain on us old folk.

Tie replacement machine.

Our ties are small compared to full size. If you look on the web for standard tie replacement machines you can see they lift the track, push out the old tie, insert the new tie and hold it for spiking. If you are an engineer, either formally or de facto, could you design one for our scale? Railroads use them to reduce labor costs and we could use one to reduce volunteer effort. Do you have a retired friend who would like this challenge?

Boom trucks:

I afraid both our boom trucks are beyond simple restoration. The white Ford needs a new engine and a lot of work on the hydraulic rams and controls and Ol' Yeller needs a new clutch, while not a major problem it is surely a captain or lieutenant problem. Any thoughts?

And that's for equipment. Now for the facilities not easily contracted out:

Inspect and paint fuel tanks.

We need to inspect the fuel tanks and possibly replace the smaller of the two, we have a replacement on hand. This is probably a two day job.

Refinish benches in the station.

The wood benches need cosmetic repair and varnish.

Install a swing gate between station and meadow to keep the hogs out.

Santa Fe caboose

Repair floor and general clean up. Come see, you'll know what I mean.

73 caboose

Insulate ceiling and install shelving. We don't have the insulation or the shelving. You could spec out what is needed and how to complete the work.

BBQ area podium:

After a quarter century the old podium is rotting away. Now Pete has thoughts of the butt end of an observation car, complete with SP drumhead, between the trees as a podium. I think it is a grand idea reminiscent of whistle stops by politicians on years gone by, no Twitter here, and so fitting with our heritage.

Crowd control.

We need to install gate near OSH caboose to restrict access to the platform to those in wheelchairs. Crowd control on event days is a problem, especially now that we have so few active members able to assist.

The "Rose bush" jib crane.

Al's rose bush gave up the ghost, but yet the concrete penetration still exists. What better place to install a jib crane of 1500 pounds or more capacity to facilitate the transfer of heavy equipment? This could be your project with your name, or pseudonym, inscribed thereon. Of all those reading this surely someone could do this, the design part at least. Step up, be a star. Hint, base diameter is 12 inches.

Turntable – install off side posts and safety chains.

We have safety chains on the public side of the turntable, but the off side has post holes so close to the edge of the pit that we remove them when equipment on the table would strike them. What is needed is to drill appropriate holes farther out from the pit and make post/chain pieces to fit. Do you have a core drill? This is your chance to be a star.

Turntable – install solar powered table lighting.

The turntable has rope lighting that requires 120vac via an extension cord. How sweet it would be if the lights were powered by solar cells and batteries. It's up to you.

Cal barn – build or purchase display cabinets with storage and install same, pretty much self explanatory.

Machine shop – replace side door.

Car shop- rearrange the furniture. This “my” shop so see me if you want to help.

- Move wheel grinder and vent to outside.
- Move furnace outside to weather resistant enclosure.

-move ‘paint’ drying rack..

Install Pete’s bill board.

Pete, our man of many ideas, proposes placing a billboard promoting various function near Vicente junction. It’s a days’ work at best. See Pete.

That’s not quite all folks. There are many small things that need someone to grab a broom or shovel, it’s known as housekeeping.

Our annual Summer Camp is July 27th thru August 24th. If we have enough volunteers we will realign the track between Windy Point and Folger, work on the house track between the turntable and the house switch, have some fire safety and hazmat training, a whole bunch of engine handling and conductor training, and generally have a good time telling stories, eating grand meals, and perhaps a little homemade music.

Fitz

July 27/28 work weekend
 July 29-Aug. 4 SUMMER FAMILY CAMP
 Sunday Aug. 3 RAILROAD TRAINING RUN DAY

Well Al Smith Day came and went and it was once again a most successful event to a capacity crowd of 500. Our thanks go to each of you for giving of your time to make it so. You are all the best hosts and hostess’ and still going strong after hosting 19 Al Smith Days!

Next on the calendar, besides our regularly scheduled work weekend, will be our Summer Family Camp [July 27-Aug. 4]. This is a week where we all get to work on projects that we know usually take more than just a few hours to complete or can be done during a normal work weekend. It’s a fun-filled week of making progress on projects, conversing, and getting to know our Swanton Family more. We always look forward to sharing these times with all. Remember too, that Saturday, Aug. 3 will be a training run day for our volunteers to get in operational practices. It is also a day that we showcase our railroad to invited guests that we hope may be so drawn to this jewel that a few volunteers might be gained. Remember the continuation of this organization relies deeply on your gaining future supporters. We want the history and life of the Overfair RR to continue, and to stay at Swanton Pacific—but volunteers are constantly needed to make it so.

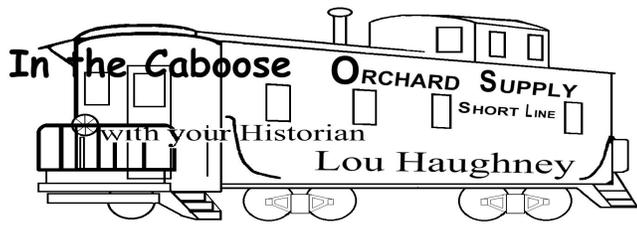
For the Summer Camp Week we do have access to the red-house so if you are planning on participating—you need to let us know so we can set up a reservation plan for rooms. Regarding meal planning, as the week draws closer we will get a list out for participants to sign up for providing a meal or two during the week. This is an opportunity for sharing your culinary talents &/or experiments?? via campside cooking—BBQing, Dutch oven, theme night selections, etc. so start planning for what and when. It will also take the responsibility of cooking off of any one person for the entire week.

All for now; hope to see you at either of the workdays and/or Summer Family Camp Week. Remember to encourage new volunteers and/or your friends to come on over to enjoy and partake in all the fun we all share in getting together at Swanton. Again we thank each of you for ALL you give and do for Swanton—if just a few moments or several.

UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

July 13/14 work weekend



OLD TIME PHOTOS
ARRIVAL OF OVERFAIR LOCOMOTIVES
1500, 1914, AND 1915
Part 2

The arrival at Swanton in 1984 of the Overfair locomotives numbers 1914, 1915 and 1500 provided several months of refurbishing work for Al Smith and his railroader friends; such as, Charlie Hoyle, Neil Vodden, and many others. They were busy repairing the locomotives, maneuvering them around the yard, and finally repainting and polishing the exterior surfaces. The latter chore was the specialty of the hostler Charlie Hoyle,

Their professional work of 30 years ago established the foundation of the Swanton Pacific Railroad. Their talented efforts restored and preserved the active life of these Overfair locomotives, which are now rapidly approaching their centennial landmark.

The attached photographs are taken from the many, many snapshots that Al recorded during the start up of the Swanton Pacific Railroad.



Moving the 1914's boiler for inspection, Al Smith on left, ??? in center, Charlie Hoyle right



Engine bells for 1914 and 1915, March 1984. Any difference between the two?



Headlights with number plates for the locomotives acquired from Jarvis estate sale, March 1984



Tender side

Note: Part 1 of this article appeared in the March-April 2013 newsletter.