



## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 236

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

September-December 2016

### REPORT FROM THE FIREMAN

Charlie Crabb, Director

I am honored to be asked to serve as the director of the Swanton Pacific Railroad. It was nearly three decades ago that I had the opportunity to work with Al Smith as he began to shape a relationship with Cal Poly to take over the ranch. During this time I was able to get a good sense of Mr. Smith's vision for the ranch as a learning laboratory. The success with the ranch agreement eventually led Al Smith to also donate the railroad.

Also, I am humbled by being asked to step into Ed Carnegie's "shoes." The Swanton Pacific Railroad as it exists today is due in large part to the efforts of Ed and his wife Mary Ann. For more than two decades Ed and Mary Ann have made sure the trains kept rolling. My goal will be to continue that tradition. I am looking forward to working with the volunteers to see that we continue efforts to restore, maintain and operate the locomotives and rolling stock.

For each of the work weekends that I have been able to make it to the railroad, I have been impressed with the dedication of the volunteers. From the Swanton Pacific Railroad Society officers to the volunteer who shows up to do whatever task needs to be done, we have a group of people for whom Al Smith's vision rings true. I am amazed at what this band of dedicated volunteers are able to accomplish.

You may have noticed I changed the title of this part of the newsletter. The fireman's role is to ensure there is enough steam to keep the train

moving. In many ways I see that as my job also, to help ensure we keep the trains rolling. I hope to be able to add value to the railroad in a number of ways. My administrative skills should help to ensure we get the support we need from the University. With my limited computer skills (I am classified as a digital immigrant) I will be working to update our web site. Finally, although we benefit from an endowment that was left by Al Smith, I will be working with the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences development team to build a base of donors who can help us further enhance the railroad. The endowment income helps keep the trains rolling, but we hope to match up donors with some great ideas to enhance the learning opportunities available when visiting the Swanton Pacific Railroad.

I look forward to working with all of our stakeholders to help keep the trains on the move at the Swanton Pacific Railroad.

### DOWN BEHIND THE RAILWAY

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

My Fellow Swantoons:

The SPRS elections are over. Charlie is now our Secretary as well as our Director, double duty as it were. We thank Amy for her years of service as Secretary.

The other incumbent Officers; myself, Pete and Randy retained their respective Offices.

Our next Executive Board meeting will be Sunday, February 12, 2017. In addition to the usual reports we will set some priorities for the year from our extensive list of “to-do” projects.

We need to form two committees at that time; one to revise our by-laws and the other to plan an upgrade to the Station.

The by-laws were written over fifteen years ago modeled on student organizations and tweaked to suit our needs at that time. Since then we have grown, changed membership, evolved duties, and modified our practice without formal documentation, especially in respect to our election of officers. I envision we need two or more folks who would be willing to look at the ‘best practice’ by-laws of other organizations, consult with present officers and members and present a draft revision at the August Executive Board meeting. That should allow enough time to make any revisions, if necessary, and present the by-laws to our members during the October General Meeting.

The Station is over twenty years old and has some issues, as it were. Of prime concern is crowd control in a safe respective manner. (Crowds don’t seem to be as respectful as they once were... hmmm). We have repaired some of the post bases but additional work is needed.

This committee will be charged with identifying issues, planning remedies and developing a time and materials plan to implement those remedies. If you elect to become a member of this committee you do not necessarily have to do the actual work but of course it would be welcomed if you could.



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As I mentioned above, Charlie is doing double work: Director and Secretary (triple or more counting his ‘day job’ at Cal Poly). Many of us are also in the double duty position which leaves us without some important

committee chairs; e.g. Membership, Safety and Operations. We have been performing these positions on a as-needed basis for a while as an additional duty. Also, we surely need a file clerk.

We are truly a miniature railway with all the needs of our larger brethren insofar as we have logistics, finances, planning, health and safety, record keeping and such. Many of these jobs do not require heavy lifting.



As Randy has pointed out; we are not a train road – we’re a RAILROAD. Without the railroad track you may as well have trucks and automobiles. Rails



need ties and ballast that needs folks to spike the ties and tamp the ballast. This is what we need most of all. So – bring your young strong friends over on a workday.

To my mind, the best part of this size railway is that the parts are not that heavy and they are large enough you don’t need a magnifying glass.

Come on over, we’ll have fun.

**Fitz**

## OUT ON THE TRACK

With Pete McFall

We now have both signals mounted at the Big Redwood Tree. They are 164 and 165; track is partially bonded to make the signals work. The next part is the installation of solar panels to keep the batteries up.



Work was done by Tom, Kua, Tony, Ken, Randy, Ernie, Alex, Dave, Kyle and Geoff. Hope I did not forget anyone.

Track work will be ongoing over the next four months, as we get ready for Al Smith Day. **Pete**



The biggest news for this issue is also our most recent news: the #1912 has been successfully shipped to Wasatch Railroad Contractors in Cheyenne, Wyoming, to be fitted with a new boiler. [Click here for the video.](#) There was an unusual amount of time required to arrange the move, due to issues with insurance, trucking and loading. This project had been delayed for some time, partly due



to repeated “seasons of other things breaking.” To be fair, it’s often not actually a case of something breaking, but rather a situation where maintenance becomes necessary and can’t responsibly be ignored. We are always on the lookout for things that can go wrong, and aim to address them before they do.



We had very successful runs for Cal Poly Day and for pumpkin sales. Everyone happy and nothing “on the ground” equals a good day.



Work continues on the motorcar. The new Kohler engine is mounted with the hydraulic pump attached and piping adjusted as necessary. The system has been tested with no leaks. A partial re-wiring is almost finished and the air tank will be installed soon. Exhaust piping needs to be fabricated and then she should be good to go. The track crew will

certainly be pleased, as this project has dragged while issues were resolved and other matters were tended to.

We are all looking forward to re-focusing our efforts on the #1913 reassembly. Air and steam piping are under way, as are the mechanical issues mentioned in the last newsletter. We wish you all good health, a great Christmas and a happy Holiday Season.

**Randy**



### UPCOMING EVENTS/PUBLICITY

Mary Ann Carnegie

Cal Poly Day was a most successful event. Many, many thanks to each and all of you.

We had a sold out crowd of 618 people – 545 registered adults, plus 73 children. Approximately 200 Cal Poly Alumni attended, as well as our hosting about 200 first-time visitors to Swanton. A few new memberships were received, so we hope to see them back on our volunteer work weekends to get to know them better and vice versa.

We sent out over 1,500 mailings for the Cal Poly Day Event. The returned RSVPs indicated that all were equally divided between being notified via Facebook, e-mail, or snail mail.

After all expenses were paid, we remained in the black with a small profit to help keep things chugging along.

The new hand-wash-station was installed next to where the porta-potties are usually placed. The sink originally cost \$40.00, plus what Kyle put in with wood and labor to build and install the fixture. The cost of renting a hand-wash-station in the past, per event, ran approximately \$100, so this will help us save some monies on future events. With the new one now in place, it is easy to hook-up the hoses for its water source and drainage; we just need to be sure to **ALWAYS** use bio-degradable soap [for many reasons]. We have that on-hand in the bathroom cabinet of the AT&SF caboose.

**The next work weekend for 2016 year will also be the Christmas Tree Runs on December 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Plans for 2017:**

We are currently looking at potential dates for scheduling our annual Al Smith Day, Family Summer Camp and Cal Poly Day. So until further notice, stay tuned.

On behalf of all of us at Swanton Pacific, we hope you and your families had a most thankful Thanksgiving. We would like to express our humble gratitude and thanks to ALL of you for your most generous support and volunteer time given throughout the year. It is your contribution that makes Swanton the huge success that it is. None of this would be possible without the teamwork from all of you. Happy Turkey Day!

**MAC**

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD IN THE DIGITAL AGE

by Rhoda Fry

Hey Railfans, remember that you can find us online in three places: our website, Facebook, and YouTube.

1. The Swanton Pacific Railroad web page at:



[sprr.calpoly.edu](http://sprr.calpoly.edu)

is updated periodically. There you can find an archive of all of our newsletters from the very beginning of the Swanton Pacific Historical Railway Society in 1991. Also, the "Calendar and Membership" link has our calendar for the year, so you'll know when we've scheduled events, meetings and volunteer days.

2. As of mid-November, our Facebook page:



[facebook.com/SwantonPacificRailroad/](https://facebook.com/SwantonPacificRailroad/)

has received nearly 700 likes representing all continents except Antarctica! Did you know that you don't have to be a Facebook member to view Facebook pages? We've been posting stories, photos and videos at least weekly since March 2015.

3. You can also find us on YouTube at:

**YouTube** [youtube.com/SwantonPacificRR](https://youtube.com/SwantonPacificRR)

where we've uploaded a few of our own videos and provide links to many videos taken by our guests. Our most popular video, which has over 2,700 views, celebrates our history at the 1915 San Francisco Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) where photos and film are set to music that might have been heard at the fair. That video can be found most easily by searching for it on Google or YouTube with the words: PPIE Train.

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD FORGES AHEAD WITH A BLACKSMITH SHOP

by Rhoda Fry

For years we've had an anvil and other equipment to set up a blacksmith shop, but did not have the skills on board to do so. But last year, a



glimmer of hope showed up at the railroad. It was Jerry Coe, a nationally acclaimed blacksmith artist from Berkeley, who stumbled upon the railroad while visiting a client nearby. This forged the plan



for a longer visit during our open house where our volunteers and guests created iron objects with his antique tools of the trade. While the first thing people usually think of when they hear the word "blacksmith," is shoeing horses, the use of the hammer and forge is in fact integral to railroading. Jerry has even built a replica of the standard-gauge gravity car that once took passengers from Mt. Tamalpais eight twisting miles downhill. You can see a photo of the replica car and historic movie footage on our Facebook page. Jerry also worked for many years for the National Park Service at Yosemite National Park and has fascinating stories to tell. We're very grateful that he is creating plans for an onsite metal-smithing area so that we will be

able to create and repair our own locomotive parts on site - another addition to the "learn by doing" credo at the railroad. Thanks Jerry for your interest in the railroad and we look forward to meeting you again!

### NEW CERTIFIED CONDUCTOR

By Rhoda Fry

During our volunteer day on Saturday, August 13, Bill Fry became our latest conductor / brakeman. He's photographed here during a two-plus hour practical test that was proctored by Geoff Tobin and Robert Ritchey. Randy Jones was engineer on the #502 diesel locomotive. The pre-requisites to this test are passing the written and practical safety tests and passing the written conductor / brakeman test.



So that more volunteers can become qualified, they've decided to add more practical training during work weekends. Stay tuned for the training schedule!

### NEW SOCIETY SUPPORTERS

Alaina Vallett	Laselva Beach, CA
Anita Ray	Belmont, CA
Walter Ruzzo	Mountain View, CA
John Gray	San Francisco, CA
Nock Lohr	Danville, CA

On behalf of the entire organization, we welcome you into our "train family" and 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.



### IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

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

Our organization is ALWAYS accepting new memberships, but especially right now for 2017.

Dues or membership renewals for the year 2017 are now being accepted.

Currently, for 2017, we have our life members and a few early birds who have already paid and are ready to be placed on the 2017 membership roster. So, now is the time to pay your membership to SPRR.

If you have any questions about dues, please contact [ecarnegi@calpoly.edu](mailto:ecarnegi@calpoly.edu) or phone [805] 995-3659. When mailing your check, see the address below.

For a mere \$35/year you become a full-fledged Swanton Pacific Volunteer.

**Make your check payable to Swanton Pacific Railroad; *mail to:***

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

