

## SWANTON PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY

Number 240

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Nov-Dec 2017, Jan 2018

### REPORT FROM THE FIREMAN

Charlie Crabb, Director

Busy is the best way to describe the activities at the Swanton Pacific Railroad. Although we continue to wait for the permits we need to start the repair of the wash-out from last winter, the volunteers have been working to put the 1913 back together, complete the rebuild of the 502 diesel locomotive, upgrade some of our passenger cars and work on a variety of facilities projects. The volunteers are also working with Cal Poly students on class projects that will contribute to the operation of the railroad. One project is to build a heavy-haul car that will allow us to move equipment via rail. The other project will give us a car that we can use to monitor the condition of our track. It is great seeing these young people working on applied projects that help to continue Al Smith's vision for Swanton.

We would like to see you at the railroad. As in the past, our work weekends for the winter months begin on the second Saturday of the month. In April we will go back to two work weekends a month starting on the second and fourth Saturday of each month. You can check our web page (<https://sprr.calpoly.edu>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SwantonPacificRailroad/>) to see what is happening. We encourage you to come out and see all that is going on.

One last comment. You should have received a letter requesting you to renew your membership in the Swanton Pacific Railroad Society. With a modest contribution you can keep on our mailing list and make sure you are aware of upcoming public events. Your donation is tax deductible and helps us to keep Al's vision alive.

### DOWN BEHIND THE RAILWAY

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

My Fellow Swantoons:

A quote for the month; *"So I sez to Janus, sez I; 'Don't look back, we ain't goin' that way.'"*

While we await repair to the right-of-way and regret that we will not be able to celebrate Al Smith Day this year, we do have several projects that need completion.

If all goes well, we will host Cal Poly Day at the end of summer with steam power. We contracted with Wasatch to return the 1912 in operating condition by mid-year. She will still need some fine tuning, but that is to be expected.



The 502 is still down for repairs and we could use your help to bring it back into service.

Pete and Tom and whoever they could wrangle have mostly completed the drainage system around and about the house track. They now need to bend some rail, which will probably happen on our Saturday work day February 10th, weather permitting.



Sunday the 11th will be our first Executive Board meeting of the year with focus on what projects are in the mill and their priorities. All members are welcome to attend. The meeting starts at 10:00 am with a social hour starting at 9:00 am.



It's not as much fun without a loco to run, we all know that. However, we need you to help finish the projects in progress so that when we have a right-of-way once again we can lay track and start rolling.

All for now – look up, look down, look all around and look ahead.

**Fitz**



There is progress to report on several fronts, albeit somewhat limited by holidays, weather (including cold), and some short bouts of illness within our ranks. The drainage project in the driveway/yard track area is virtually complete, and has been moving water away nicely. Congratulations to Tom, Pete, and their dedicated crew who have mixed many, many bags of concrete mix for the drains and slab. They suffer from the fact that it's almost impossible (and extremely expensive) to get a concrete truck to deliver to Swanton on the weekend. Next up is bending new 20 lb. rail to replace the track to the turntable.

The 1913's oil bunker and the 502's fuel tanks are back at the railroad after getting a beautiful paint



job by Brian Deutscher. Fitz-and-friends installed the bunker in the 1913's tender, and that work is very nearly complete.

Fitz, Lloyd, and Kua continued on the handi-car repair and balancing, working on trim and seats, and getting to about 90% complete. Ed has been working on the design of the 6-wheel Buckeye trucks for the "heavy-haul" car that Cal Poly students are building on campus. The 502's new ASME code-



compliant air tanks have arrived, and fit-up is under way. Three small shaft covers and seals on the main gear case have been persistently leaking oil for years, and Bruce has made new gaskets and seals to fix them. Time will tell if we've found all the leaks. We hope we will have time to isolate the leaks in



the axle gear cases, and fix them as well.

Work on the 1912 in Cheyenne has been proceeding at a steady pace. The firebox has been

installed in the boiler, and many, if not all, of the stay bolts have been welded in.

As if we didn't have enough to do, the big shop air compressor suffered a motor failure. A new 25 hp motor has been ordered, and the compressor itself is getting some much-needed service. This unit was donated to the railroad some 20 to 25 years ago, and, except for oil, has cost us nothing in all that time.



We had to ship a throttle valve to Cheyenne, and Kua helped out by making



a small shipping crate for it. The valve and linkage weigh about 40 lbs., and a simple

cardboard box just wasn't going to be adequate to protect it.

At the 1913, Kua helped me lift the cab off one last time for some work that couldn't be reached otherwise, and then put the cab back in place



permanently. It is now bolted down tightly. The reach rod is in place, and the air piping is also finished and "up" for the last time. Lloyd has been



working on the pilot ("cowcatcher"), a rebuilding job that was begun, I believe, by Bob Wilkinson (if this isn't the case, I'd appreciate hearing about it).

Bruce is working on the details of measuring and machining the main crossheads, valve guides, and valve stem crossheads. As we have found so often (to our disappointment) with this engine, many things were forced into place originally and consequently wore unevenly. Now it's a challenge (and our best opportunity) to make the parts fit together properly.

Thanks to all who have helped out so generously!

**Randy**

## CHRISTMAS TREE SALES

by Robert Ritchey

In November we planted 25 new Douglas Fir seedlings for our Christmas Tree operation. Thank you Walter and the new member (whose name I can't remember) and his son for helping finish up the planting with me. I am happy to report that we have 100% survival of all the trees we have planted. As long as our underground "friends" who leave large mounds of dirt in our grass and fields leave the trees alone, they will be fine.

**Robert Ritchey**

## OUT ON THE TRACK

With Pete McFall

### All Crew Members

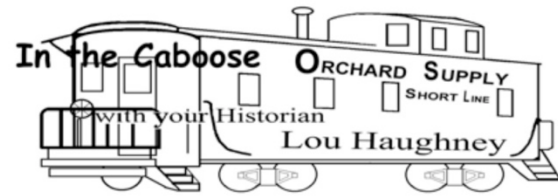
We are getting ready to commence track work. First on the list is to finish rolling the curved rails for the section of track at the roundhouse to the house switch. This work is being done in the Car Barn, but since we have to work around the weather, rain will delay us since we have to clear the Car Barn of cars to have room to do the bending of rail.

Once we have the rails rolled we will remove the existing rail, ballast, rake and level what is left, lay new underlayment and survey the new curve. Then start laying the new 20 lb. rail.

Once the rail is in place we will then align and level the track, then tamp.

Some of this work will be done during the week (Tuesday and Thursday) as well as weekends and work weekends, so if you're available on these days contact us so we can coordinate our crews. We need to complete this in the shortest amount of time since once we take out the old track we will not be able to do any movements of rolling stock to the pit for inspections or turning cars that are to be worked on in the car shop.

After the project is completed and if we still don't have the permits for the washout, we will work on the passing track at the station. It needs aligning and leveling. This is the first impression that the public sees so we need to make it look good. **Pete**



*This is an article originally written by SPRS historian Lou Haughney for the January 2001 newsletter with information about how the 502 diesel was acquired.*

Papers containing a "prospectus" and photos of what is now the SPRS's 502 diesel locomotive were found in Al Smith's home. The "prospectus," or invitation for offers to buy, gives a description of the locomotive as it was in 1981. The edited text of the prospectus follows:

### PROSPECTUS ON DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE

The 19" gage locomotive was built approximately 12-15 years ago by Keystone Light Railway Products Company, in Herminie, Pa. The two persons who actually did the construction were Carl Auel and Dr. Walter Teskey. Copies of "builder's photos" were taken on location in Kentucky, where the equipment was first used in a public operation. The equipment was subsequently shipped to Alabama, but apparently was not operated there, and was returned to Herminie. The locomotive engine has not been run in over a year, and is stored inside. The locomotive was built to scale, and cost originally \$33,000 [late 1970's].

#### SPECIFICATIONS

19" gage, 19 ft. long, 5'4" high, 3'6" wide, 92HP Continental Diesel engine, air brakes on loco, engine powers either one axle on each truck or two axles thru hydraulic drive, weight 13,600#. As was stated in the ad, the sale of these items is to settle the estate of Dr. Walter J. Teskey. The equipment is at Herminie, PA; 7 miles west of Pennsylvania Turnpike Interchange #6 (Pittsburgh) and 5 miles south to the town. If interested, contact me at the address and phone number below.

L.J. Redman

7115 Church Avenue Ben Avon,

Pittsburgh, PA 15202

412/761-2400

June 1981

The image of the locomotive shows the number "3746" painted below the cab window. Only a few letters of "Kentucky Central" are visible along the body of the diesel where the middle of the locomotive is in a shadow, probably of a nearby tree. A batch of color snapshots accompanying the

prospectus show the condition of the diesel in 1981 when it was offered for sale. The second owner's identifying legend reads "Alabama & Historama Railway." No other papers pertaining to



Al's acquisition of the diesel have yet been found; such as a bill of sale or the "ad" mentioned in the prospectus.

How much did Al pay for the equipment? Did he travel to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to inspect the equipment? A letter from Joel King of Helena, Montana appeared in the March 1998 issue. Joel identifies himself as the son of Walton King. He wrote, in part:



*"My father, Walton King, along with Walt Teskey and Carl Auel, started Keystone Light Railways of Pittsburgh, PA. As a little fella, I spent many an evening with my dad as he drew plan after plan of 19" gauge equipment for Keystone. I still have some of those original drawings that he made. I also, along with my two brothers and grandfather, helped my Dad lay three and a quarter miles of 19" track down in central Kentucky, then later built another line down in Alabama. (Then after his father died as a result of a tragic automobile accident in 1969, the King family) ... just faded out of Keystone at that time. We knew that eventually the 19" gauge equipment was sold from storage in Alabama but never pursued it beyond that."*

It looks like the writer of the 1981 prospectus was not aware of the King family's early involvement in the Keystone Light Railway company. An article written by Randy Jones for the September 1999 issue of the SPRS newsletter tells how Al Smith acquired the Keystone equipment from the Teskey estate. Someone in the original SPRS gang saw an advertisement in a 1980 railroad magazine about a 19" gauge diesel for sale in Pennsylvania. Al and

Charley Hoyle went back East to inspect the items. They found the equipment to be in poorer condition than was described by the ad and the prospectus. Yet, it was salvageable and Al decided to buy the engine. He and Charley returned to the Pittsburgh area to supervise the loading of the locomotive into a freight car for shipment to Swanton.



The engine was given its "502" name when someone quipped, "the engine runs so well you could run it drunk." Based on that, Charlie soon suggested the unit be numbered the 502, after the old DMV code number for drunken driving.

In recent years, Marty Campbell has taken the 502 as his special charge, and he has skillfully repainted and detailed its exterior. More importantly, Marty, assisted by Bill Engelman and Randy Jones, has spent many, many workdays rebuilding the engine and drive mechanism to make it into the ever-ready work engine for the SPRS.

A question still remains: Did the Keystone Light Railway Products Co. make other GE U25B 19" gauge models? An undated, early inventory list for the Overfair Corporation, the Jervis-Shaw-Franklin enterprise, includes a U25B locomotive.

Another comment: Notice how much of the SPRS rolling stock has passed through estate sales. Billy Jones acquired the original Overfair equipment from the estate of Louis MacDermot. He sold the 1914, 1915, and 1500 to the Jervis-Shaw-Franklin group. Bob Maxfield bought the 1912 and the 1913 from the estate of Billy Jones. After buying the latter two engines from Bob, Al Smith obtained the 1914 and the 1915, and Neil Vodden the 1500, from the Jervis estate.





## IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

*Treasurer—Ed Carnegie*

### A Report from the Treasure

With the New Year, the renewing of one's membership to the Swanton Pacific Railroad becomes due as well. So if you haven't renewed or sent in your dues please "due".

Dues for 2018 have been coming in steadily, as it seems that every day that I go into Cal Poly we have more letters with their membership forms and dues attached. We currently have 17 lifetime members. Some of them still pay dues. However, with a Lifetime Membership status, dues are not required, but their volunteering hours and financial support are both always graciously accepted.

Lifetime membership can be awarded by our board upon a volunteer contributing an excess of one thousand [1,000] hours to Swanton Pacific Railroad. Since 2006, when as the Society's Treasurer, records were being kept of hours logged in by each of our volunteers, we now show, as of January 2018, a grand total of 74,664 volunteer hours, and of those hours 40,410 came from volunteers with Lifetime Memberships. It is the total of these hours that have and continue to make the Swanton Pacific Railroad such a success.

### Current Membership Summary as of January 2018:

- As of now we have 74 paid members for 2018.
- On the other side of the ledger, we have 67 members who paid in 2017, but have not paid current dues.
- 15 members have not paid dues since 2016.
- 14 members have not paid dues since 2015.

If you wish to support the Swanton Pacific Railroad PLEASE fill out and sign the dues form; then send it in with your payment for the current year's membership. If you no longer are interested in being a Swanton member, please let us know so that we may keep our records current.

The Treasurer does need your help. If you purchase an item for the railroad and receive an invoice, please get that invoice to me for payment as soon as

possible. The easiest way is to place the invoice on the clipboard under the sign-in lists in the machine shop. It sometimes has taken as long as two months from the date of purchase to receive an invoice and issue a check request. Often, I do not even know we have a bill until I receive a statement from the vendor. Then begins the time-consuming process of looking for the paper work or asking the vendor to send me a duplicate invoice. It is so much easier and faster if I have the invoice[s] in order to process the check requests in a more timely and efficient manner, often eliminating a late fee charge as well. Thank you.

### ON A SAD NOTE:

This past Christmas a card was received from Linda Nichols, wife of long-time SPRR member, Bob Nichols. She sadly informed us that Bob passed away from heart and kidney failure in December of 2016. Many of you knew and volunteered with Bob during the early days of Swanton

He was also a long-time friend of Al's, and early supporter of the Swanton Railroad. Bob was instrumental in helping organize and pave the original Swanton driveway. He helped teach and show some of us the secrets on how to "water witch", although Ed would ALWAYS find the pipes, water and/or electrical lines in other ways! - especially when paving the driveway.

Through Bob's former employer, Tibbetts in San Jose, he was able to acquire and donate to SPRR two of the original workhorse trucks. Many may recall—the old yellow crane and the white boom trucks. Each of these vehicles played a major role in helping get many projects more easily accomplished on the railroad grounds and facilities, especially with the 1998 washout and the construction of the Warren Truss Bridge [aka Ed Carnegie Bridge].

Bob was always willing to help, and as Elmer Stone would say, "He'd gutter done!" Bob definitely walked softly, but carried a big stick. He will be missed, but remembered by many of us.