

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way update for January 29, 2017. A week with no rain seemed almost strange. Nonetheless, it was a welcome relief. Now, let's get going on bringing you up to date on the MOW Team's latest adventures before it starts raining again!

Chris Carlson, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Heather Kearns, Joe Margucci, Matt McCracken, Frank Werry, Harry Voss, Mike Harris, and Gene Peck arrived at the Erecting Shop on Tuesday ready to make good progress. Gene, Harry, Cliff, and Pat removed the hydraulic cylinder on the spike puller. Last week, we used the machine at Setzer while dismantling the switch at the east portal of the tunnel. It developed a significant hydraulic leak out of the vent on the top of the cylinder which got progressively worse throughout the day. The cylinder will now be sent out to our hydraulic repair vendor. Over in Old Sacramento, Heather and Joe took on the electrical parasite that drains the battery of the A-4 motorcar when it's not in use. Matt, Mike H., and Frank retrieved the center-dump ballast car which had developed a flat-spot on one of its wheels. Matt and Mike H. fired-up the Kalamazoo tug and got the car into position. Conductor Frank contacted the Union Pacific dispatcher in Omaha and soon had secured a "green" signal indication. Once at the Shops, Chris C. hopped on the forklift and brought the hopper-car into the building. The wheel would be replaced on Thursday. Thus, a productive evening for your MOW Team came to a close.

The mighty Weed Team headed to Hood on Thursday for a day of defoliation. Despite many challenges, including the road to the Weed Team's container being a flooded muddy bog (or perhaps, "vernal pool" is a better description), Mike Taylor, Ed Kottal, and Frank managed to deploy the motor-car and spray-rig. Mike T. and Ed donned their white Tyvek suits and mixed the blue-brew that magically turns green to brown. Frank piloted the motor-car which shoved the spray-rig up the line while Ed and Mike T. applied blue-brew along the right of way. Mike T., Ed and Frank deserve special commendation for their efforts at Hood. In addition to the flooded road, they overcame other obstacles without complaint or clock watching which is a testament to their dedication and strong characters!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Weston Snyder, Matt, Joe, Mike H., Alan Hardy, Frank, and Heather gathered to keep the progress moving forward. Mike H. and Heather set out to hunt down a pesky air-leak from under the ballast-regulator. They removed the floor-board in the cab and identified the faulty hose. Then, they tried to start the machine to energize the system only to discover that the battery was dead. We are plagued by bad batteries of late! Despite the battery-switch being in the "off" position, something must still be drawing on the battery. More on this later. Joe, Matt, Weston, and Alan replaced the bad wheel on the center-dump ballast-hopper. Matt brought in the forklift and lifted the hopper while Alan, Weston, and Joe worked to remove the bad wheel and install a one. It's kind of like changing a tire on a car – and kind of not. To make a long story short, by evening's end, the hopper was rolling on an even keel once again.

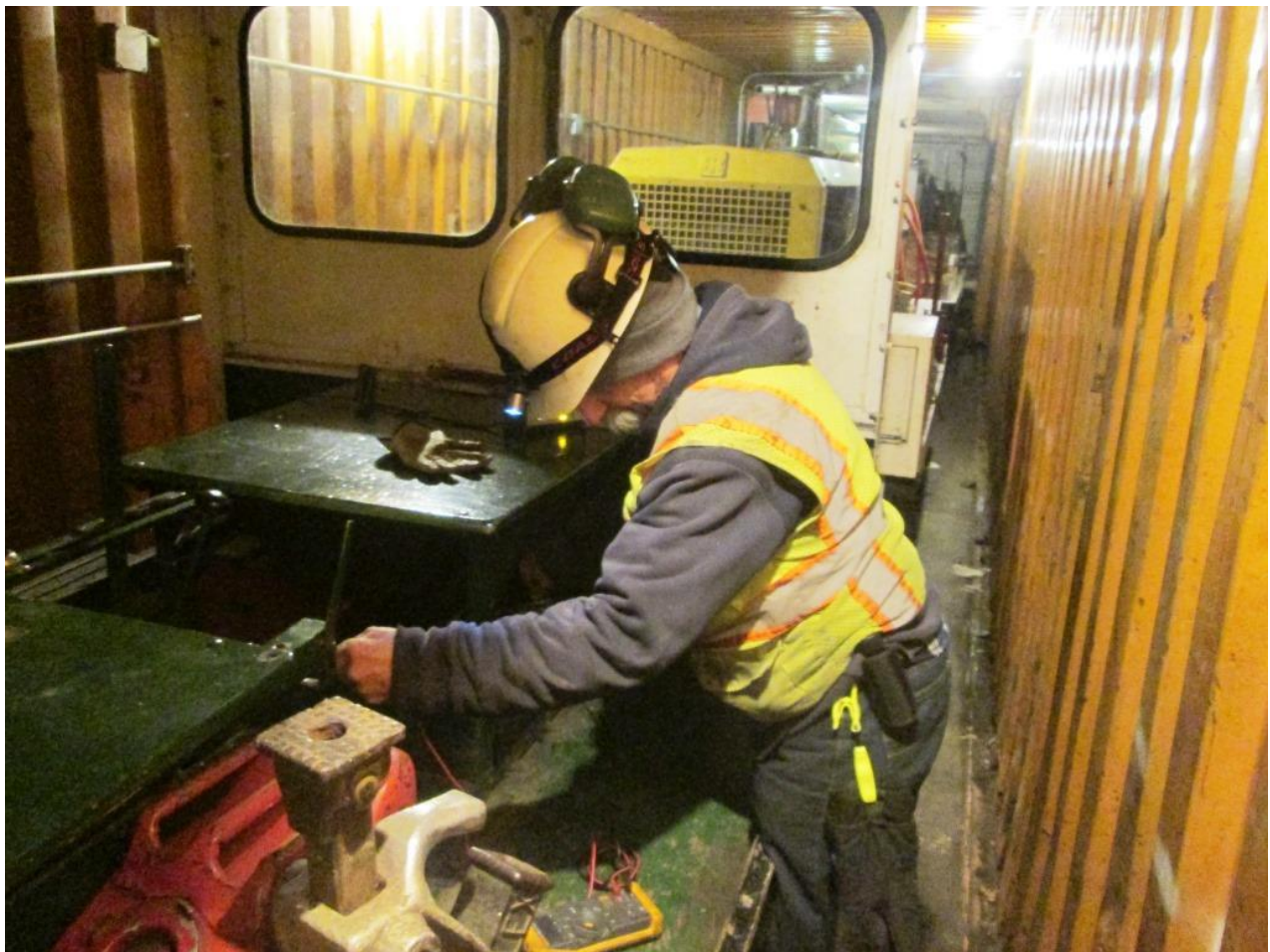
A big crew showed up on Saturday. Thanks to Tom Freeburger and Josh Bailey, two beautiful pink boxes of fresh, sugary, fried-dough welcomed Heather, Michael Florentine, Frank, Chris Machado, Chris C., Ed, Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Matt, Joe, Alan, Mike T., and Taka Blackburn. Saturday was the Railroad's annual General Meeting – at which, the MOW Team would make a presentation – and "First Train of the Year." The plan, which was to take the ballast-regulator and tamper out on the line and do prep-work for the big track-raise which will commence in earnest next week, was formulated with the idea that we'd break mid-morning for the MOW presentation, return to work, then be back in Old Sac. in time for the annual crew photo. Alas, despite the double dose of doughnuts, Saturday would end up being one of "those" days. First off, somehow, the ballast regulator's turntable broke free from its securing-latch and deployed which rendered the machine unmovable and took a significant amount of time to resolve. Then, a new air leak developed (apparently from the actuator that engages the transmission). As such, it became a challenge to release the brakes. To make matters worse, the operator noticed that the volt meter showed that the machine was only producing about 10 volts which meant the battery was not charging. So, the regulator was "bad-ordered" and parked. So much for the plan of the day. By now, the morning plan had been pretty much scrapped. In fact, it was time for the MOW Team's presentation at the General Meeting. The EIC issued an "Executive Order" requiring all MOW Team members to attend. Following the presentation, the Team attempted to salvage the day by heading out on the line. Mike F. took the back-hoe to Broadway to fill the ballast hoppers, pulled by Matt in the Kalamazoo, and Heather in the tamper. Once filled, the hoppers headed to Clunie where they were disgorged by Clem, Tom, Josh, and Alan. Chris M., Pam, Joe, Matt, Josh, Clem, and Tom became human ballast regulators and spread the rock between the rails. Then it was time to rush back to town to join in the annual group photo of the entire SSRR Crew, following which, the MOW Team took its own crew photo. The Team then headed to lunch while the First Train of the Year was out on the line.

Following lunch, the Team returned to Old Sacramento and prepared to head out on the line once the train returned. Mike F. returned to Broadway with the back-hoe. Matt and Heather headed south in the Kalamazoo and tamper. Once again, the rock-cars were filled and disgorged on the track. The Team made a couple of runs before packing it in for the day. Back at the Shops, the ballast regulator's maladies continued to plague us. But, we managed to get it safely into Bay 4 of the Erecting Shop. Joe started hunting down this new air leak and Chris C. went to work on the electrical issue. It appears that the electrical issue may be a bad alternator. The day had not gone quite as planned. But, this fantastic crew has a special talent of adjusting to adverse circumstances on the fly. And they did an outstanding job!

This coming week, the Tuesday and Thursday Shops crews will focus on getting the ballast regulator up and running. Meet at the Shops at or before 5 o'clock. The Weed Team will head to Hood on Tuesday to prune trees. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, God willing and the regulator don't die, we'll commence the track-raise south of Mile Post 1. Doughnuts will be disgorged at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks to all!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



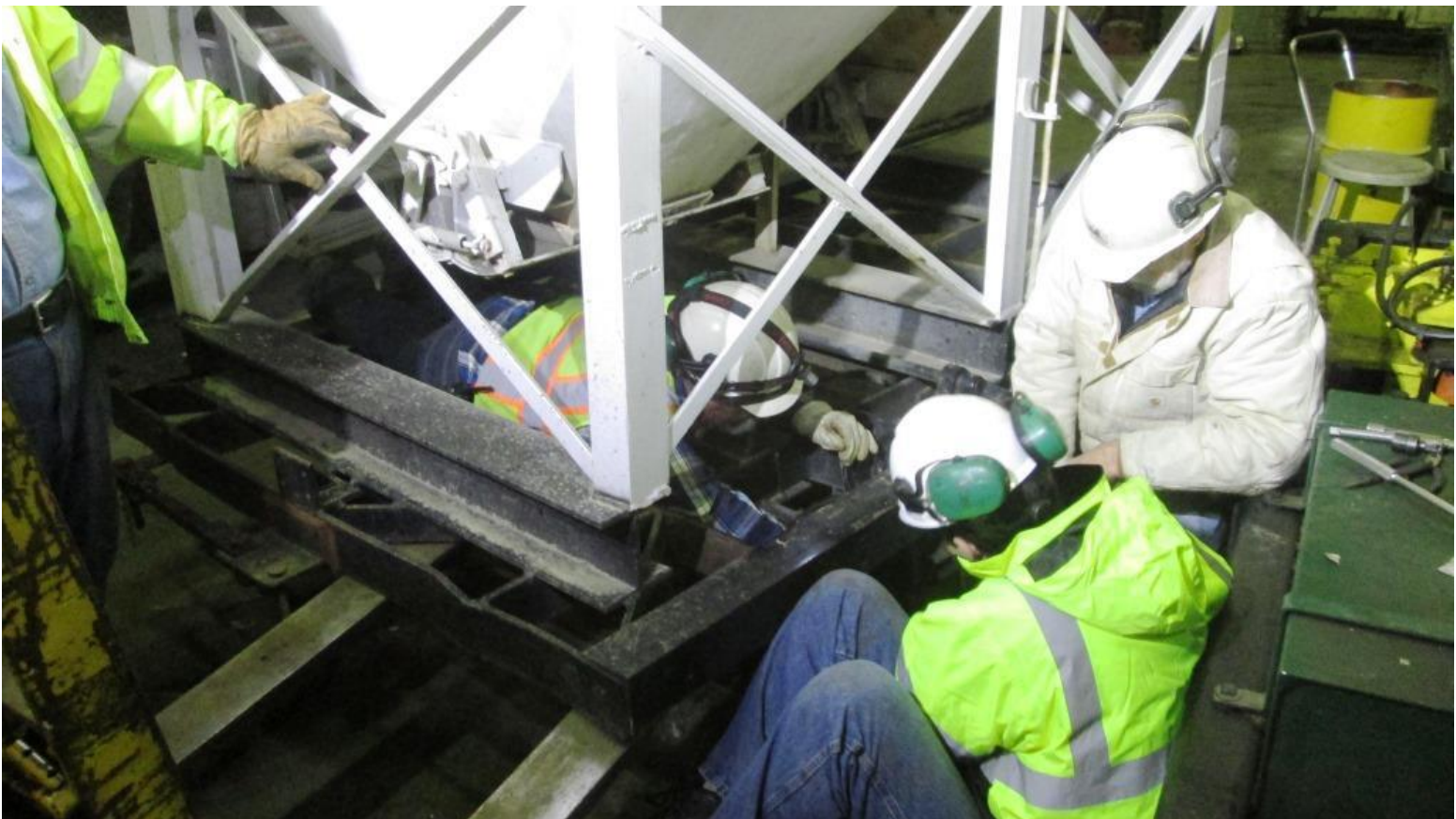
Joe seeking the electrical "parasite" on the A-4 motorcar



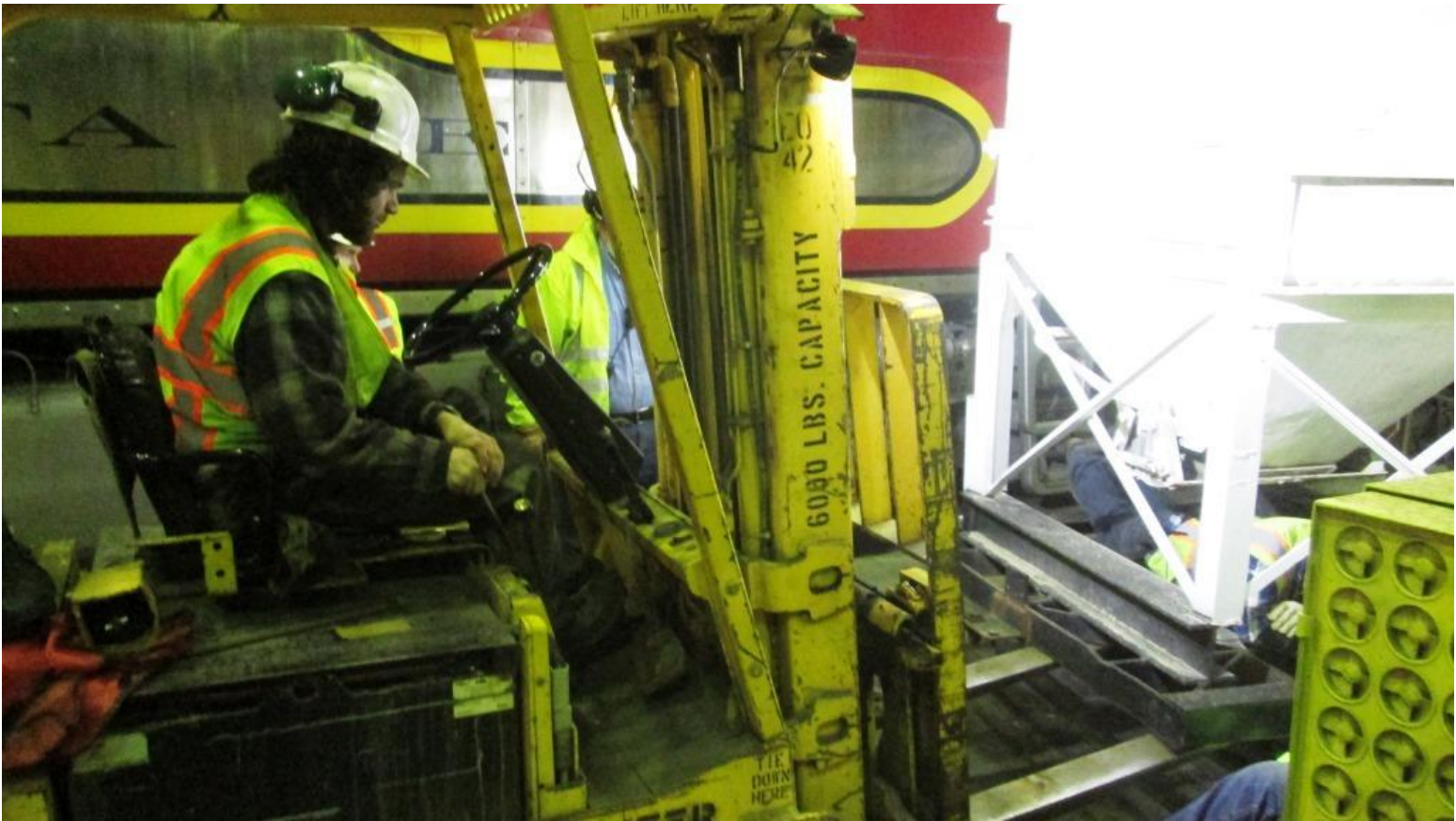
Mike T. and Ed prep the Weed Team's water tank which is used to mix the magical blue-brew



Chris C. weaves the ballast-hopper with the wobbly wheel into the Erecting Shop



Joe, Weston, and Alan remove and replace the wobbly-wheel



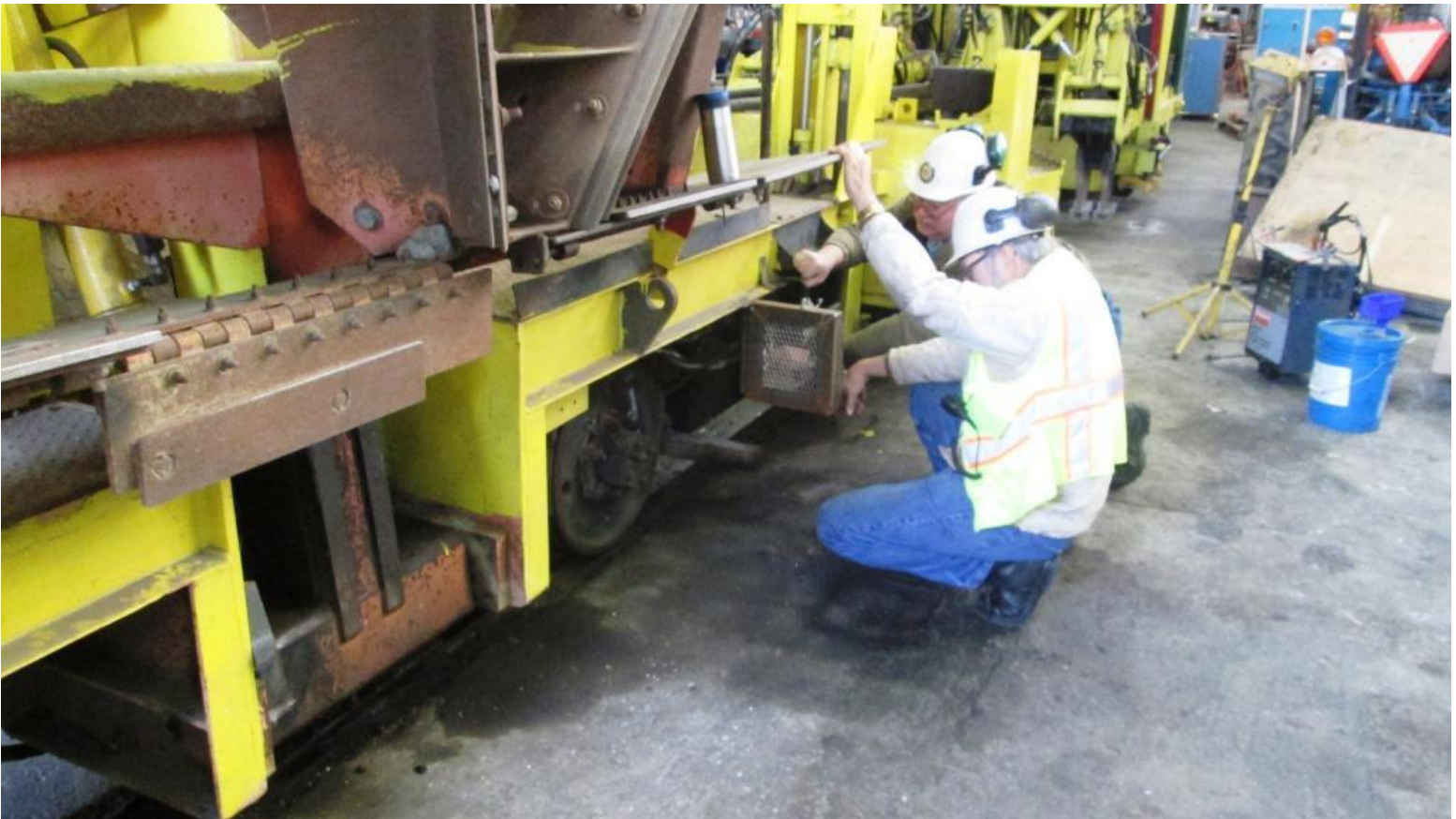
Matt lifts and lowers the ballast-hopper as needed during the wobbly-wheel replacement process



Ed and Mike T mix the magical blue-brew...



...And shower it along the right-of-way to prevent the emergence of green things



Saturday's first challenge: Alan and Chris C. endeavor to retract the turntable on the ballast regulator



The tamper and ballast regulator are ready to roll – or so we thought...



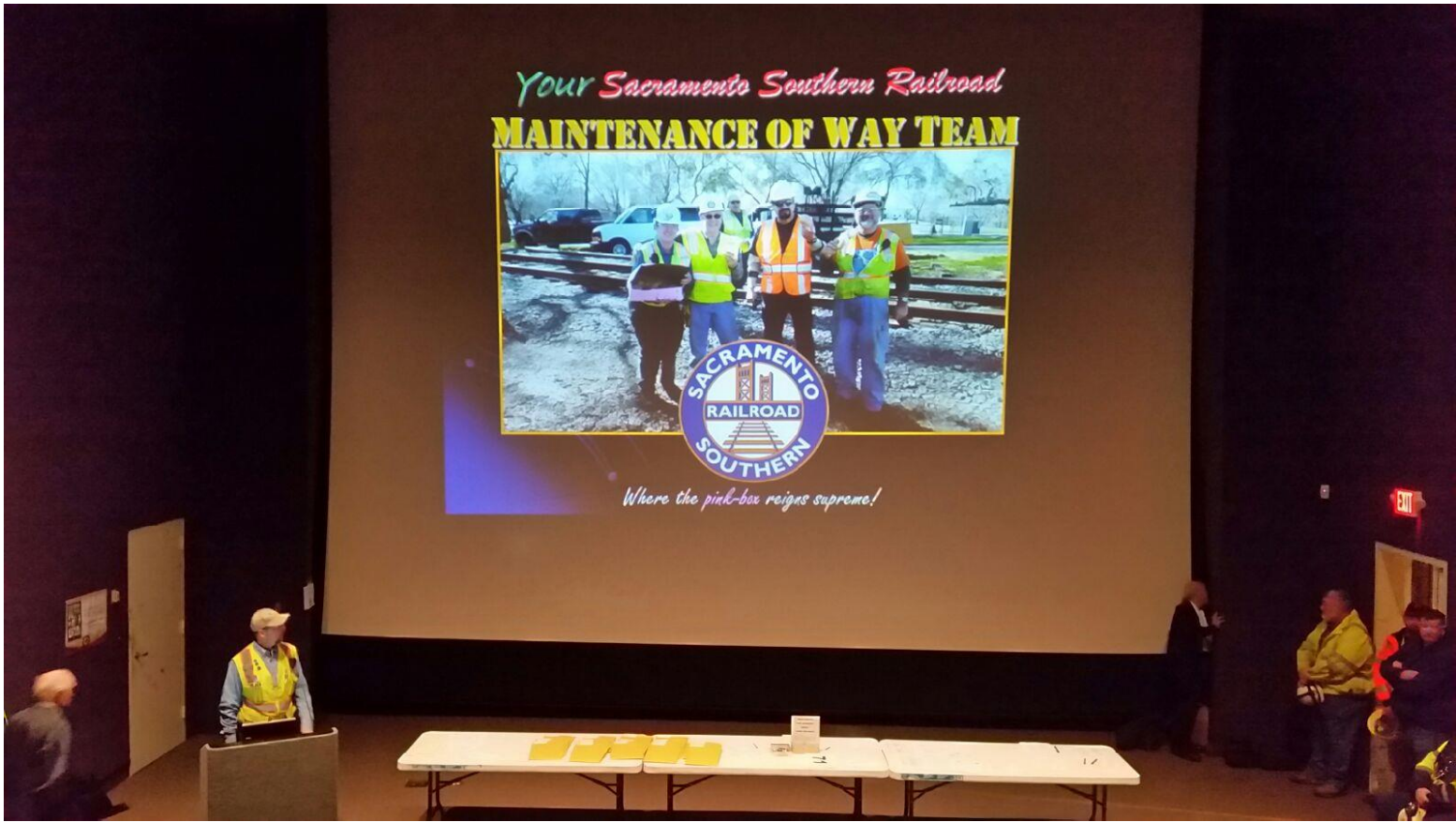
Alas, with the regulator now bad-ordered, Joe, Josh, Clem, and Pam become human switch-engines



Heather brings forward the tamper which has now been designated to pull the hopper-cars



Finally, the Team makes it to Old Sacramento. Matt then carried the sacred pink box *in the lead* preceding the people and was the signal for *their advance* into the General Meeting...



The Maintenance of Way presentation underway in the CSRM East Theater



With the presentation done, Mike F. on the back-hoe loads the side-dump hoppers





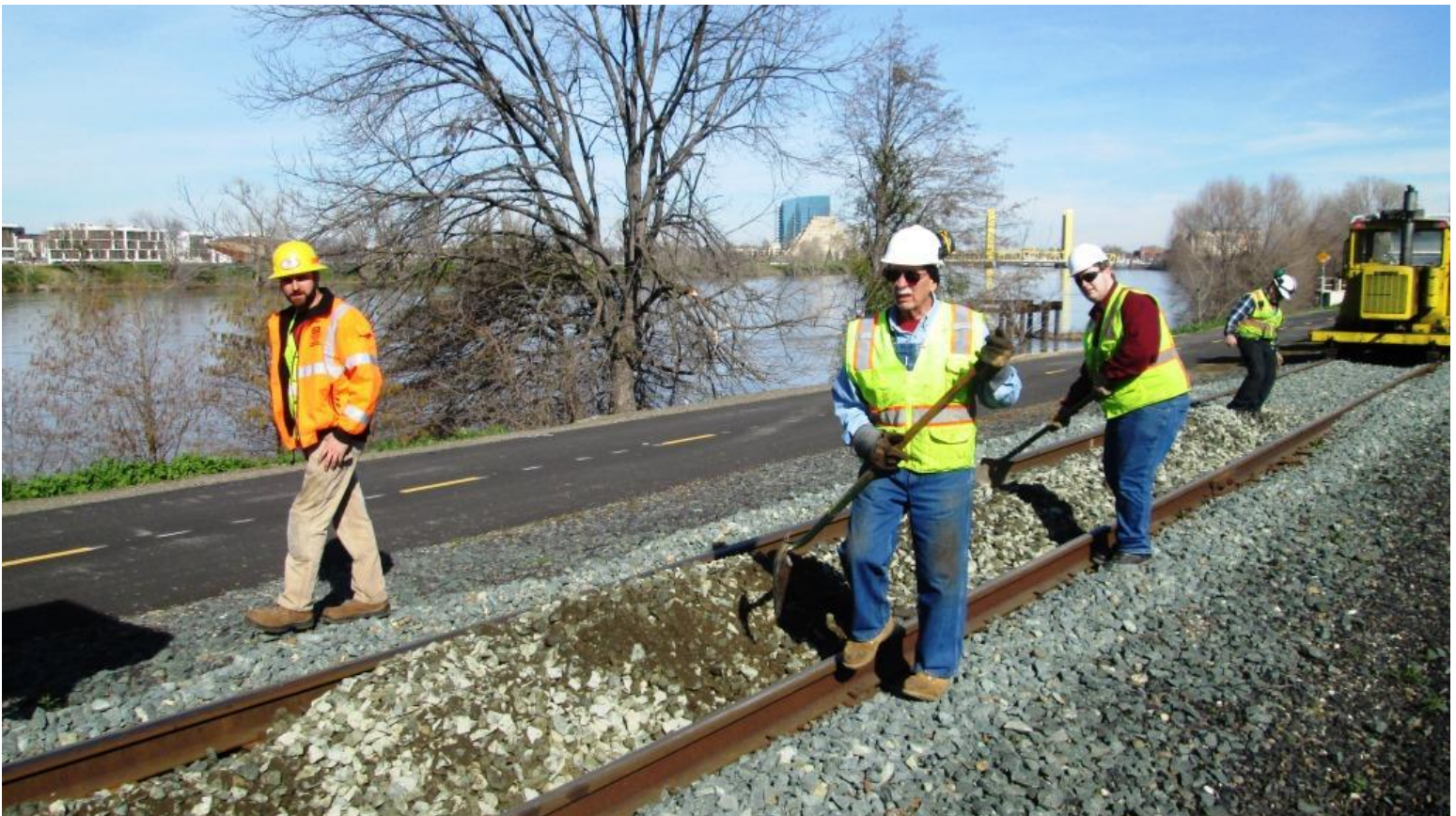
A more dramatic view of Mike F. loading rock into the hopper-cars



With Matt at the controls of the Kalamazoo creeping south, Alan and Clem disgorge rock along the line



Clem and Josh pour ballast-rock onto the opposite side of the track



Chris M., Clem, Josh, and Joe were the human ballast regulators spreading the rock between the rails



Matt, Chris M., and Joe knock-down high-spots and spread the rock by stomping on it



After lunch, the Team returned to Broadway to continue their endeavors



Josh and Tom continue with the ballasting of the track in the afternoon



Your 2017 MOW Team: (top from left) Clem, Mike F., Tom, Matt, Joe, Ed, Mike T., Josh, Heather, Pam, Chris C., and Chris M.; (bottom from left) Frank, Alan, and Taka