

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for November 26, 2017. It was a bit of a short week for the MOW Team due to the Thanksgiving holiday. But, the Team was not short on accomplishments. So, let's all be thankful that this update starts right now.

Frank Werry started Tuesday off early by joining Dave Megeath, Ed Kottal, and Joe Galipeau of the Signal Department on their fiery adventure of thermite-welding new bond-wires on the rail replaced by the MOW Team a couple weeks ago on the Sutterville/Zoo Line. You will recall that, when we replaced the broken rail down there, we had to remove the bond-wires at the two joints. The rail was within the circuit of the approach to the Sutterville Road grade-crossing warning system which is fully functional. Frank piloted the Kalamazoo tug hauling all of Team Signals' necessary equipment to the site. Ed grinded off old bond-wire welds. Joe and Dave placed the bond-wires and mounted the thermite-weld molds. Joe then ignited the thermite setting off forces more powerful than the sun to bond the bond-wires to the rails. At Clunie, they deployed their thermite again and repaired another bond-wire that was failing. All in all, an outstanding multijurisdictional job by MOW and Signals!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Heather, Mike H., Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Cliff Hayes, Chris Howard, Frank Werry, and Anthony Filamor were thankful to be together on the eve of Thanksgiving Eve. Anthony, Chris H., and Frank headed out to the transferable runway to reposition the temporary rail located at the north end which is used for moving things on and off of the north Firing Line track. But first, a section of K-rail needed to be relocated. Anthony climbed on the forklift and was guided by Frank and Chris H. They got everything repositioned and properly placed. At the welding-station inside the Erecting Shop, Cliff, Mike H., Pat, and Gene worked together to straighten out a draw-bar for our equipment that got severely bent when it fell off one of our machines a few weeks back. Cliff heated it with the torch while Gene, Mike H., and Pat combined efforts to straighten it out. Then, they moved on to repairing our rolling paint-table which had fallen apart. As all tasks were accomplished, the Team wished other "Happy Thanksgiving," and said, "Good night!"

With Thursday being Thanksgiving, the MOW Team took the evening off. General MOW activities for Saturday were also annulled in commemoration of Thanksgiving weekend and the start of the Polar Express. However, Alan Hardy felt that there may be some folks out there looking to "escape" Thanksgiving revelry for a few hours. So, he hosted a "Shops Day" to work on projects around the Shops. Sadly, there were no doughnuts for Heather, Anthony, and Paul Jansson who joined Alan on Saturday. While Alan and Paul worked on projects around the Shops, straightened things up and moved things around, Heather and Anthony headed out on the line to repair a track-defect recently discovered by our trusty track inspector, Ed Moriarty. A joint-bolt had broken at Mile Post 2.4 along the west rail. After surveying the situation, Heather determined that, due to thermal contraction, the bolt-holes were not lining up. So, Heather had Anthony loosen the bolts at the joint on the other end of the rail. This allowed for some lateral movement of the rail. Using a drift-pin inserted into the bolt-holes (where the broken bolt was found) and a sledge-hammer, the holes were aligned, new bolt inserted and all nuts tightened. Done! The defect was corrected. Next, Heather and Anthony donned "huff-and-puff" machines blew away tons of organic debris that had gathered on the track between Mile Post 1.8 and Mile Post 2.2. It looks like a whole new track down there thanks to their efforts. Finally, Anthony and Heather filled up several jerry-cans of diesel and headed to Old Sacramento to top-off the Kalamazoo which was getting a little low on fuel. With that, the Team called it an early day and headed over to Old Sac. to watch all the excitement of day two of Polar Express 2017.

Speaking of Polar Express, the first 12 of 80 runs occurred over Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. Without doubt, it is a tremendous success. All trains were sold-out. The all-volunteer Sacramento Southern Polar Express crew did a fabulous job guaranteeing that all passengers who traveled south to the North Pole returned with memories to last a lifetime. Your MOW Team was right there in the thick of things helping make the first weekend of PoEx '17 such a sensation. Amongst them were Kyle Blackburn, Matt Blackburn, Taka Blackburn, Anthony Filamor, Kevin Hecteman, Heather Kearns, Joe Margucci, Dave Megeath, Bev Ratzlaff, Al Utzig, Frank Werry, Steve Wilson, and Dave Wolf. Proceeds from Polar Express help fund Maintenance of Way's budget so, the MOW Team likes to do its part to help make it a hit. Many thanks to all CSRM/SSRR volunteers who do such fantastic work, and show such dedication, by volunteering time and time again on PoEx '17!

This coming week, your MOW Team will pick-up the pace and returns to full active duty. Tuesday and Thursday, the Team will gather at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. The mighty Weed Team will deploy on Thursday to prune trees through Oleander Alley. Meet at the shop at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, the MOW Team will head out on the line for more adventures – and fresh doughnuts – starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Once again, thanks to everyone for your dedication.

See you out on the line and happy HOT CHOCOLATE!

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.





Ed grinds the old bond-wire welds off the rail

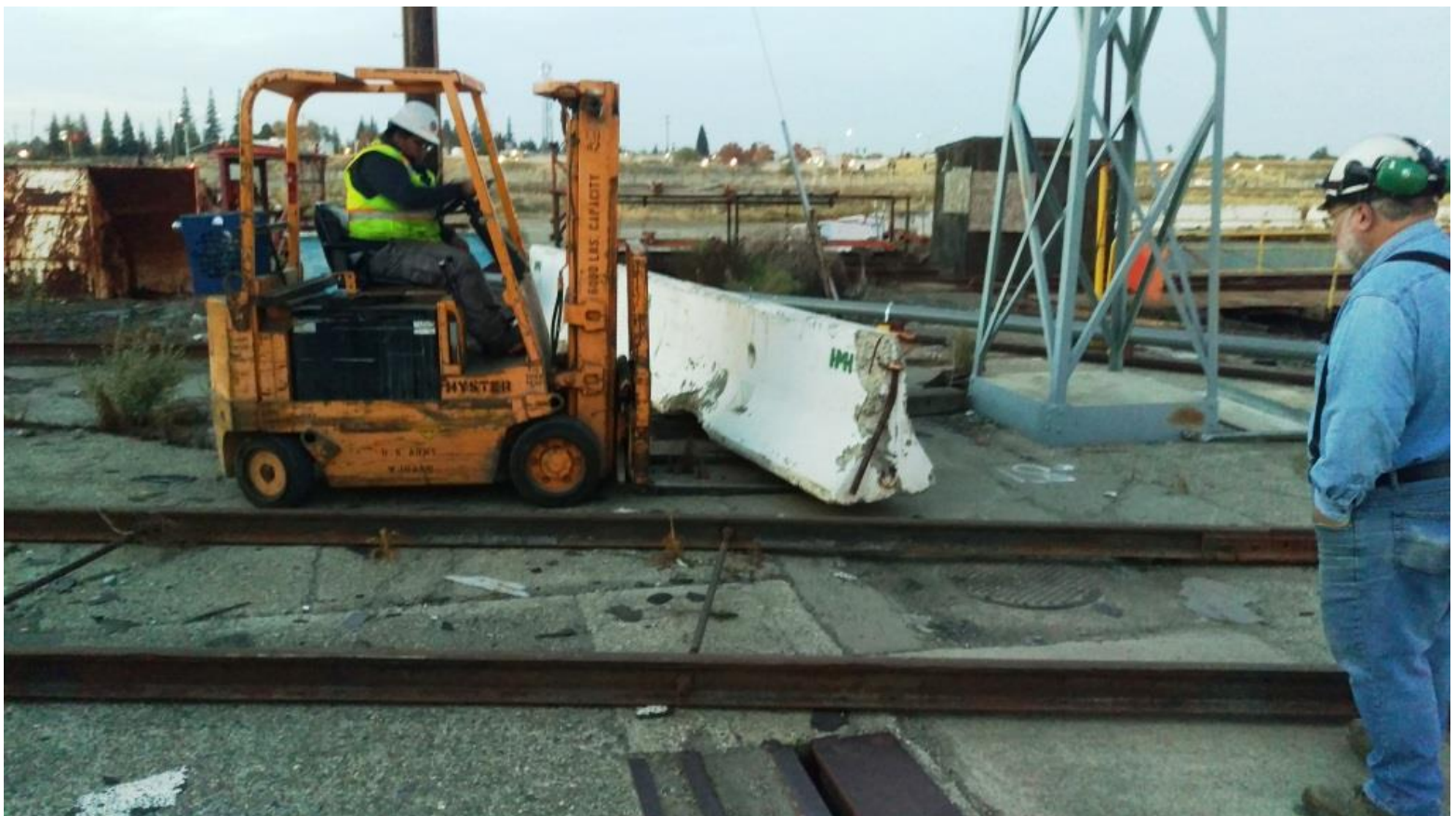


Joe ignites the thermite which will bond the wonky bond-wire to the rail at Clunie





Cliff and Gene heat the bent draw-bar

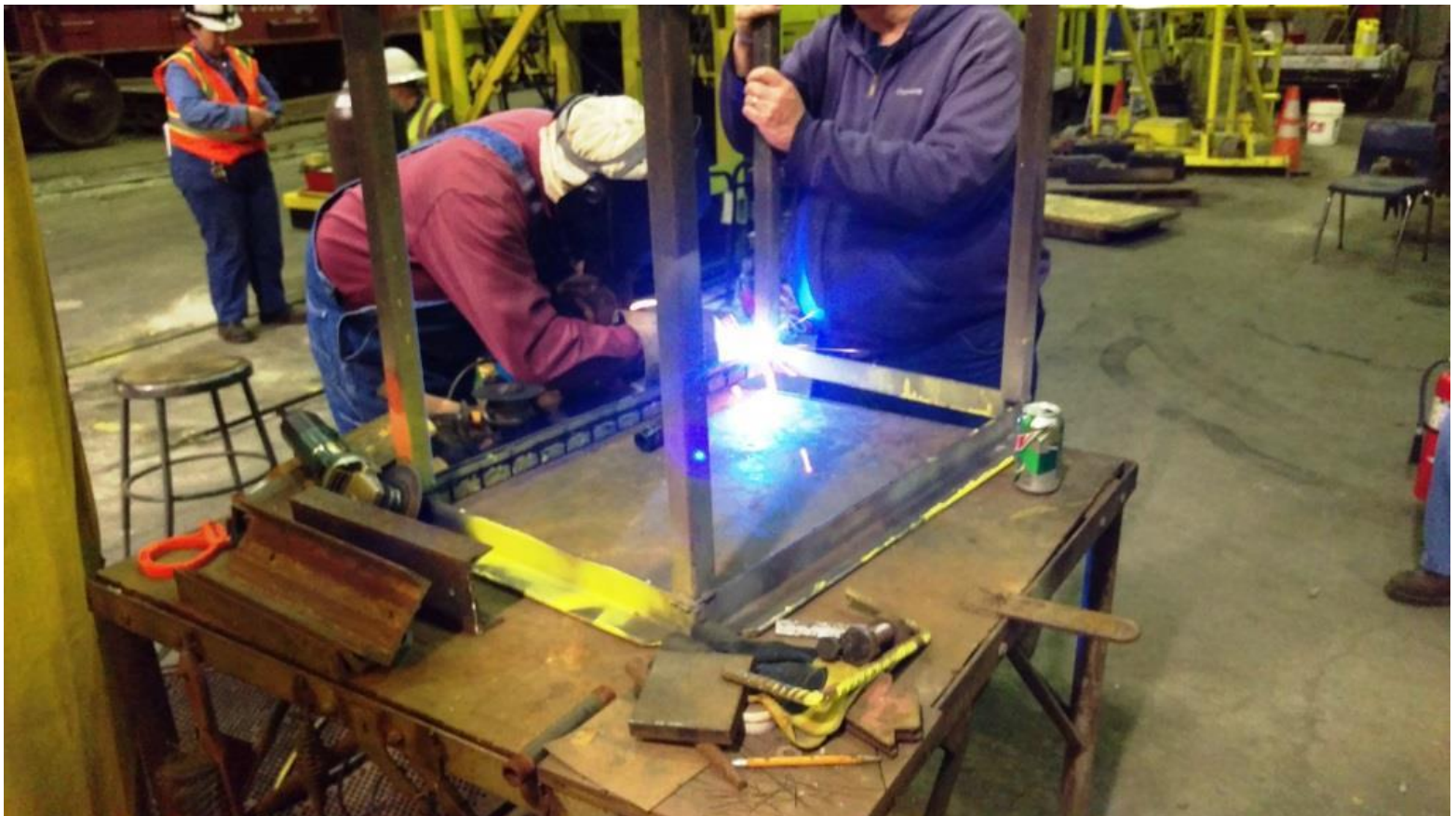


Frank and Anthony move the section of K-rail so that the temporary tracks at the north end of the transfer table runway can be repositioned



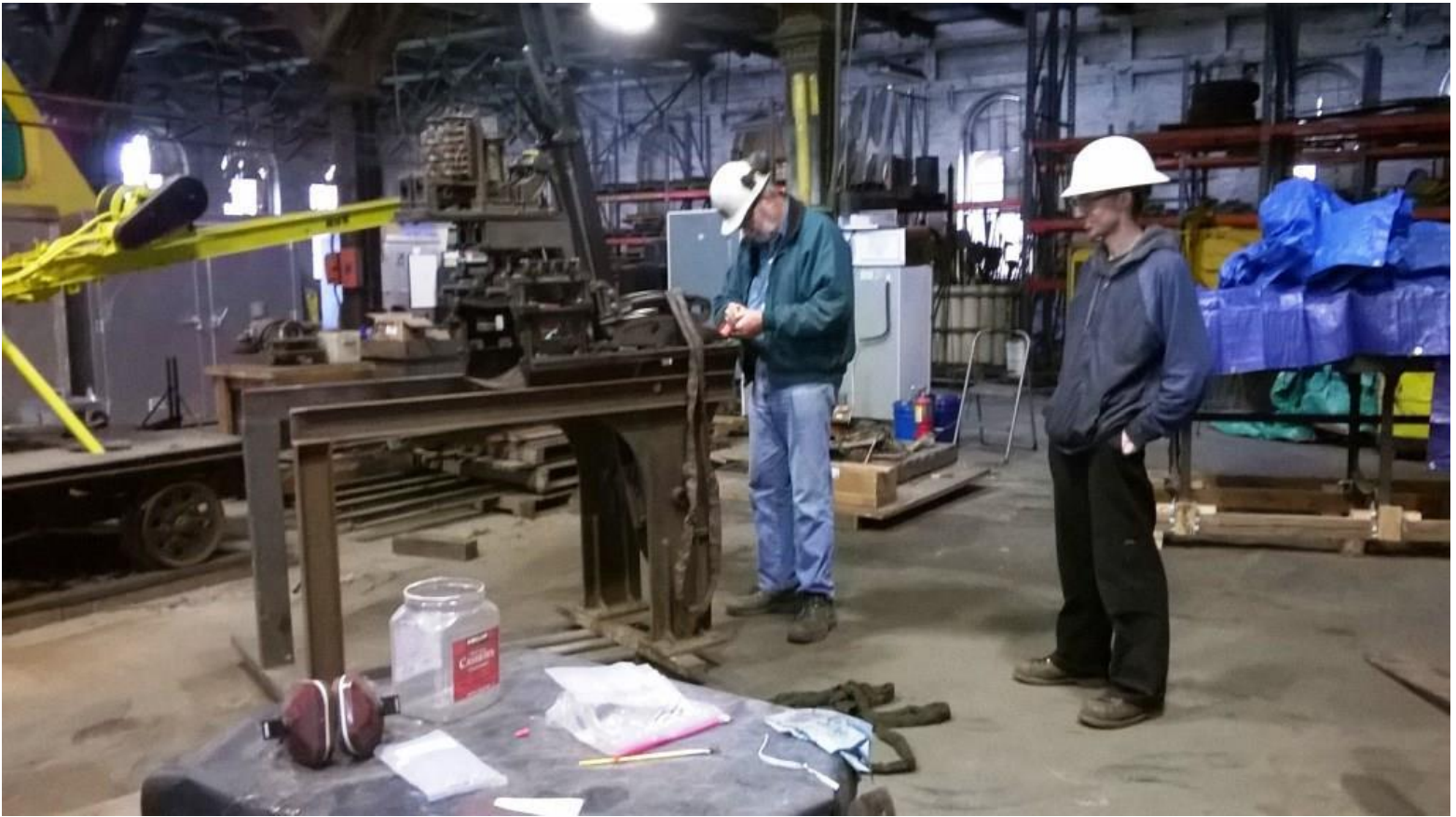


Cliff welds our rolling paint table back together



Cliff and Gene work on reconstructing the rolling paint-table





Saturday morning, Alan and Paul work on Shops projects



Anthony adds five gallons of diesel to the Kalamazoo





At Mile Post 2.4, Anthony tightens down the new bolt



Anthony dons a "huff-and-puff" machine to blow organic debris off the track





All fresh and clean, thanks to Heather and Anthony



The SP 6051, head-end power for the Polar Express, on day three of the happy hot chocolate festival!