

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for February 21, 2016. Our pride in our progress was tempered with news of a tragic loss. Myrletta Downes, a stalwart member of the MOW Weed Team, Manager of the Car Department, McKean Award recipient, crew dispatcher, ticket-agent, car attendant, and dear friend lost her battle with that evil scourge, cancer, this week. Myrletta was remarkable. She possessed a keenly perceptive intellect and sharp sense of humor. She led the SSRR Car Department with great alacrity during a challenging time of transition and only stopped when her doctors forbade her from continuing. Her loss is felt by the entire Museum community. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her husband, Willard, a great friend to the Museum and Railroad, himself, and the entire Downes family.

And now, the Update. Tuesday was like living the “Parable of the Prodigal Son” in the Erecting Shop as Joshua Iliac returned from a long absence (although we didn’t kill the fatted-calf for him). There to celebrate Josh’s return were Gene Peck, Mike Harris, Frank Werry, Heather Kearns, Frederick Carr, Mike Taylor, Alan Hardy and, Cliff Hayes. Quickly, the Team moved on to more important things. Alan, Mike H., and Frank began the evening by organizing and compiling the for the Part 214 binders for the class on Wednesday night. Fred and Josh finished up work on the cord-rack that they built on which extension cords can be hung. Cliff and Mike H. continued their efforts at rebuilding the support-struts on the derrick crane. Attention shifted to the newly restored A-4 motorcar where Heather, Gene, and Frank stood ready to fire-up its engine for the first time in over three years. After a few fits and starts, the A-4 roared to life! Another successful venture for the MOW Team! All in all, a productive evening, indeed.

Federal law requires that all roadway workers be trained in the railroad’s on-track safety rules and procedures once every calendar year. So, to fulfill that mandate, the annual Part 214 “Roadway Worker Safety Training” was offered on Wednesday. Technical malfunctions required our relocation from the East Theater to the Stanford Gallery which caused a few organizational challenges. Nonetheless, all 54 attendees adjusted to the out-of-normal situation with ease and passed the exhaustive and extensive exam with flying colors making them all legal to work out on the line. Many thanks to all who attended, and for rolling with the punches, so to speak, to make it a successful evening.

Heather, Fred, Mike H., and Cliff were Thursday’s humble but redoubtable Shops crew. Fred built a new mounting bracket for the tie-shear’s new air-dryer/oil-separator. He then got it installed. Mike H. and Cliff continued rebuilding the support-struts on the derrick crane. Heather staged equipment and tools the Team would need on Saturday for the continuation of the big rail-replacement/upsizing project near Front Street. Thanks to Heather, the Team was well prepared for returning the SSRR Mainline back to service.

Two pink boxes greeted the MOW Team on Saturday morning thanks once again to Tom Freeburger. There to enjoy the bounty Tom provided were Alan, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Clem Meier, Pamela Tatro, Mike Willis, Mike Miller, John Rexroth, Chris Carlson, Harry Voss, and Frank. Joe Galipeau and Jim Coviello from the Signal Department joined the fun (and to make sure we didn’t cause any mischief). At Front Street, the Team picked-up right where we left off last week. The goal for the day was the installation of enough ties to reopen the line for service. It would prove to be a very labor-intensive day. We started at the north end by Front Street. Because there was a 35-foot area of unsupported track, the Team could only insert one tie at a time, gauge the track, spike it, and then move onto the next tie. Steve, nimbly operating the Big Green Machine, grabbed a bundle of ties off a flatcar for distribution. Alan, in the scarifier-inserter, dug-out the tie-cribs and began pulling ties into place. This took a good deal of effort as some were going in at an angle. So, Tom, Heather, John, Frank, and Clem used shovels and mattocks to dig-out under the ends of the tie-cribs to better level the ties. As each tie was pulled into place, the Team nipped the rails and the ties, inserted tie-plates, gauged the track, and set spikes. The pneumatic spike-driver was then used to drive the spikes. Pam and Frank worked on taking apart the joints of the old 75-pound rail which had been shoved to the side. It needed to be moved in order to make room to insert ties. A great deal of rock had to be moved by hand which is tough work. By lunch time, the Team had installed a sufficient number of ties with proper distribution at the north end to be reactivated. After lunch, we attacked the south end. The tie-cribs were dug-out by the scarifier, new ties pulled in, then plated, gauged, nipped, and spiked. The last tie to be inserted kept getting stuck as it was going in at too steep an angle. Mike M., John, and Heather had to remove it by hand then re-dig the side of the tie-crib so that the tie could be pulled-in at a lesser angle. Meanwhile, as all this work was going on at the south end, Steve hopped in the tamper and, with Chris directing from the ground, tamped the line from Front Street south. Mike W. and Mike M. got the last ties spiked up. Then, Steve and Chris brought in the tamper to tamp the south end. All the while, Signals Jim and Signals Joe were operating the Front Street crossing system so that we could bring our machines back and forth across Front Street. They also kept an eagle-eye on the signal wires that connect the south approach to the signal control box. Team Signals’ help has been invaluable throughout this project. There are still about 15 ties to install at both ends. But, a sufficient number of ties were installed for the line to be reopened for service. And just in the nick of time. Tuesday Trains commence on Tuesday! So, at this point of the day, one tuckered-out crew packed-up and returned to the Shops pleased with their accomplishment. The heavy work these volunteers did on Saturday was remarkable and worthy of our gratitude!

This coming week, the MOW Team Tuesday and Thursday crews will gather at their normal times – at or before 5 o’clock in the Erecting Shop. As for next Saturday, in deference to Myrletta’s memorial service which is scheduled for 10 o’clock a.m., **we are postponing Part 214 “Roadway Worker Safety Training.”** Look for further updates on a rescheduled time. Also, look for further updates regarding Saturday’s MOW work plan. We will return to Front Street as we work to build a better railroad! Many thanks to all!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Alan, Mike H., and Frank assemble materials for the Part 214 Roadway Worker Safety Training class



Heather, Fred, and Frank prepare to fire-up the mighty four-cylinder engine of the A-4 motorcar for the first time in three years



Cliff puts on a show welding a support-bracket together for the derrick crane



Josh and Fred show-off their nifty cord rack



Fred installs the new air-dryer/oil-separator on the tie-shear



Mike H. and Cliff (on the floor) bolt the new support-bracket onto the tie-crane



Clem guides the truck in for a perfect “hook” with the air-compressor



Alan goes for a spin in the scarifier



Signals Joe kept us safe by deploying the crossing gates at Front Street when we needed to cross



Steve on Big Green grabs a bunch of ties off the flatcar as Chris provides direction



Oops! That's a little steep – with Alan in the scarifier, John guides a new tie under the north end



OK, that's more like it...



Heather nips the tie as Tom and John set spikes



Then, Tom drive the set spikes the rest of the way in with the pneumatic spike-driver



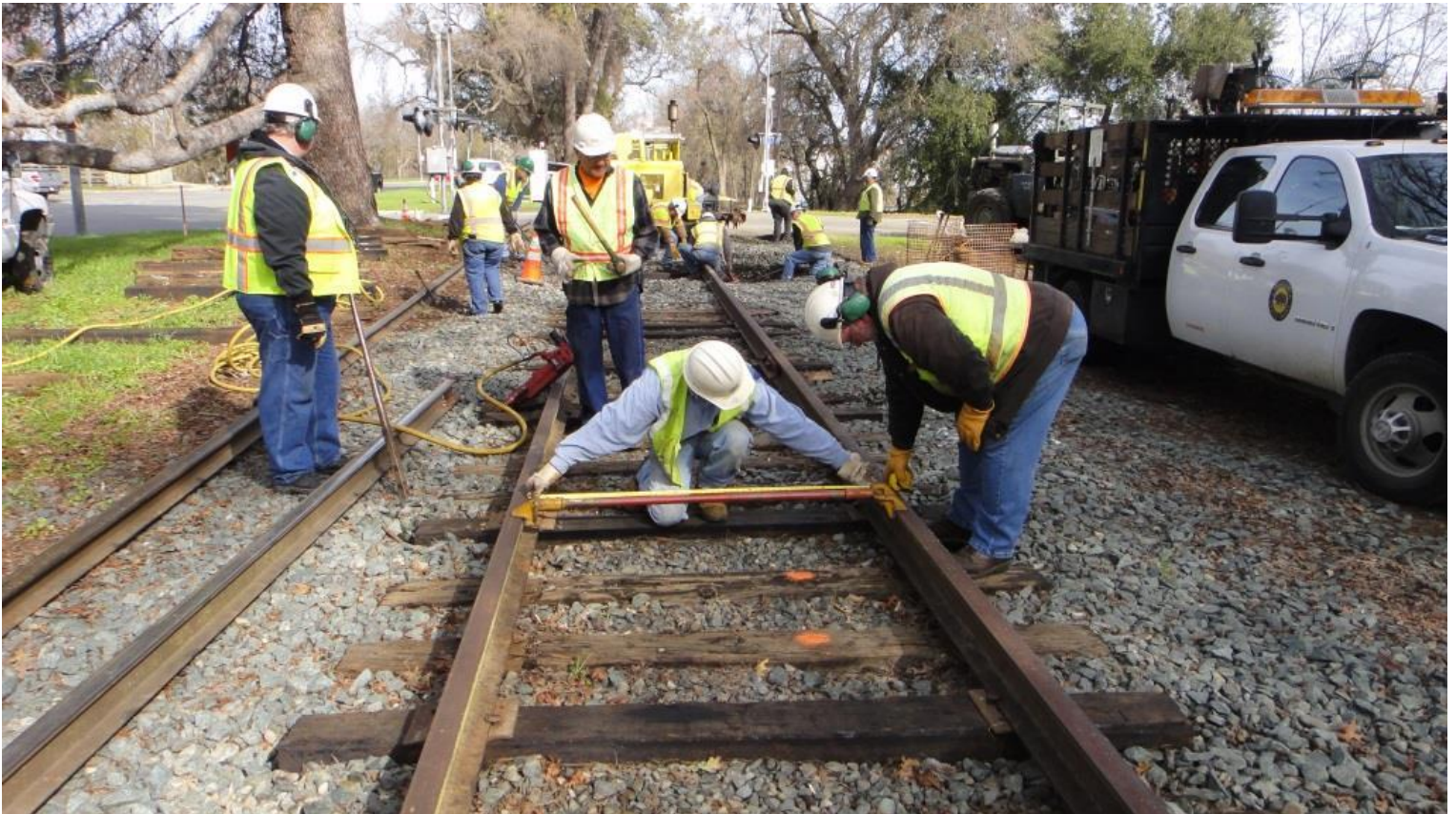
Meanwhile, Pam takes apart the old 75-pound rail...



...So that Steve could come in with Big Green and move it out of the way



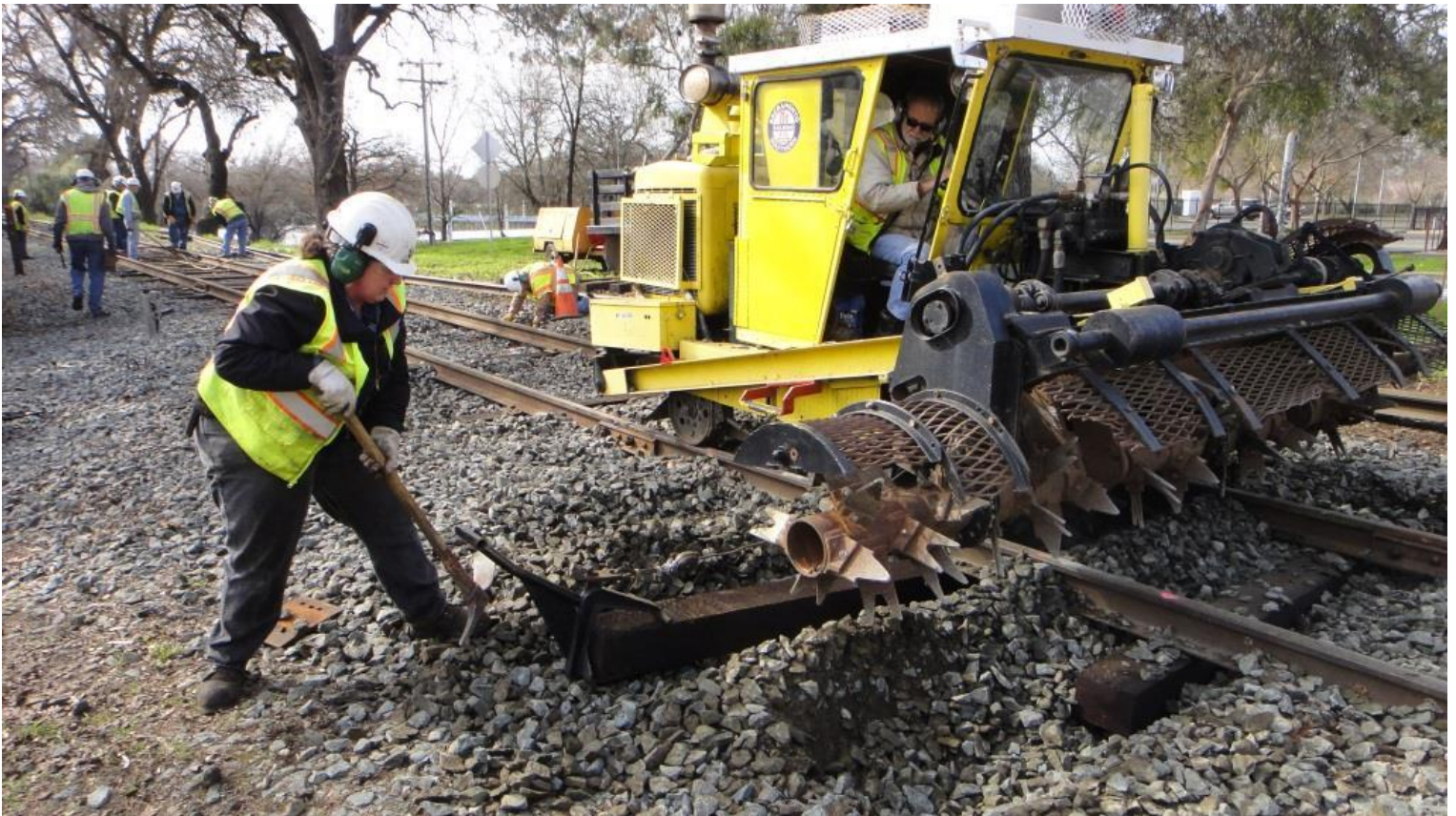
Chris nips-up the tie as Pam sets spikes



Mike M. and Frank verify gauge before spiking down the west rail



Mike W. and Tom nip-up the tie as Steve spikes



Alan in the scarifier tries to pull in another tie. But first, Heather digs out rock from beneath it to reduce the angle of insertion



Frank distributes ties for insertion at the south end near the switch



Batman vs. Superman!



Mike W. nips while Tom sets spikes



At the south end, John and Alan work to pull in more ties



Meanwhile, Steve in the tamper guided by Chris begins tamping the new track



The new tie just wouldn't go in so Heather, John, Alan, and Mike M. struggle to remove it before trying again



OK, that's better. Now it's working...



With the last ties finally in place, Mike W. spikes while Mike M. nips. John keeps an eye on 'em...



Mike M. and Heather load extra ties onto the flatcar as the Team-packs up for the day



Signals Jim drops the gates one last time as we head back to Old Sacramento