

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 18, 2014. The MOW Team suffered a tragic loss this week with the passing of our good friend and one of our longest serving and most dedicated volunteers, Steve Mathias. Steve was a great man. He was always in good spirits, ready and willing to do whatever was needed to get the job done. Smiling and upbeat after having driven 20 spikes, he'd say, "That was fun. Can we do some more?" We nicknamed him "The Machine," and threatened to stencil a number and weight on him because of his never-ending stamina. Plus, he was much more reliable than most of our mechanical equipment. Steve made Maintenance of Way a family, where we work together for each other and for the camaraderie. He was a man who truly loved life and freely gave of his talents for the betterment and enjoyment of others. He is an irreplaceable loss. We will miss him tremendously. Many of us know Steve's wife, Darlene, as well. Please her in your thoughts and prayers. She's a wonderful person and has been through a great deal, herself, over recent months.

The Mighty MOW Weed Team is on hiatus for a couple of weeks. But, Tuesday, Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Frank Werry, and Alan Hardy brought their dedication to the Rail Yards for an evening of MOW fun. Alan and Pat went on a field trip to collect a donation of some important track maintenance artifacts. Heather, Fred, and Frank met in our ever changing "corporation yard" to the west of the Boiler Shop. The on-going saga of the Boiler Shop continues as we're still unable to work inside the building. While we await some working space in Erecting Shop, I really want to thank those who are sticking with us and continuing to volunteer with MOW. Please don't get discouraged. This too shall pass...

Thursday the Team did not gather. However, we did receive some very good news. The California State Railroad Museum Foundation Board approved our budget! Our budget proposal this year was based on our needs for accomplishing several important projects on the railroad. We can now commence acquiring the equipment and materials necessary to proceed. It may be hot this summer but, we will have plenty of good projects to do with sufficient materials to get them done. Many thanks, indeed, to Capital District Superintendent Dana Jones, Foundation Executive Director Kathy Daigle, and Museum Director Paul Hammond for all their support and efforts on our behalf to secure this year's healthy MOW budget!

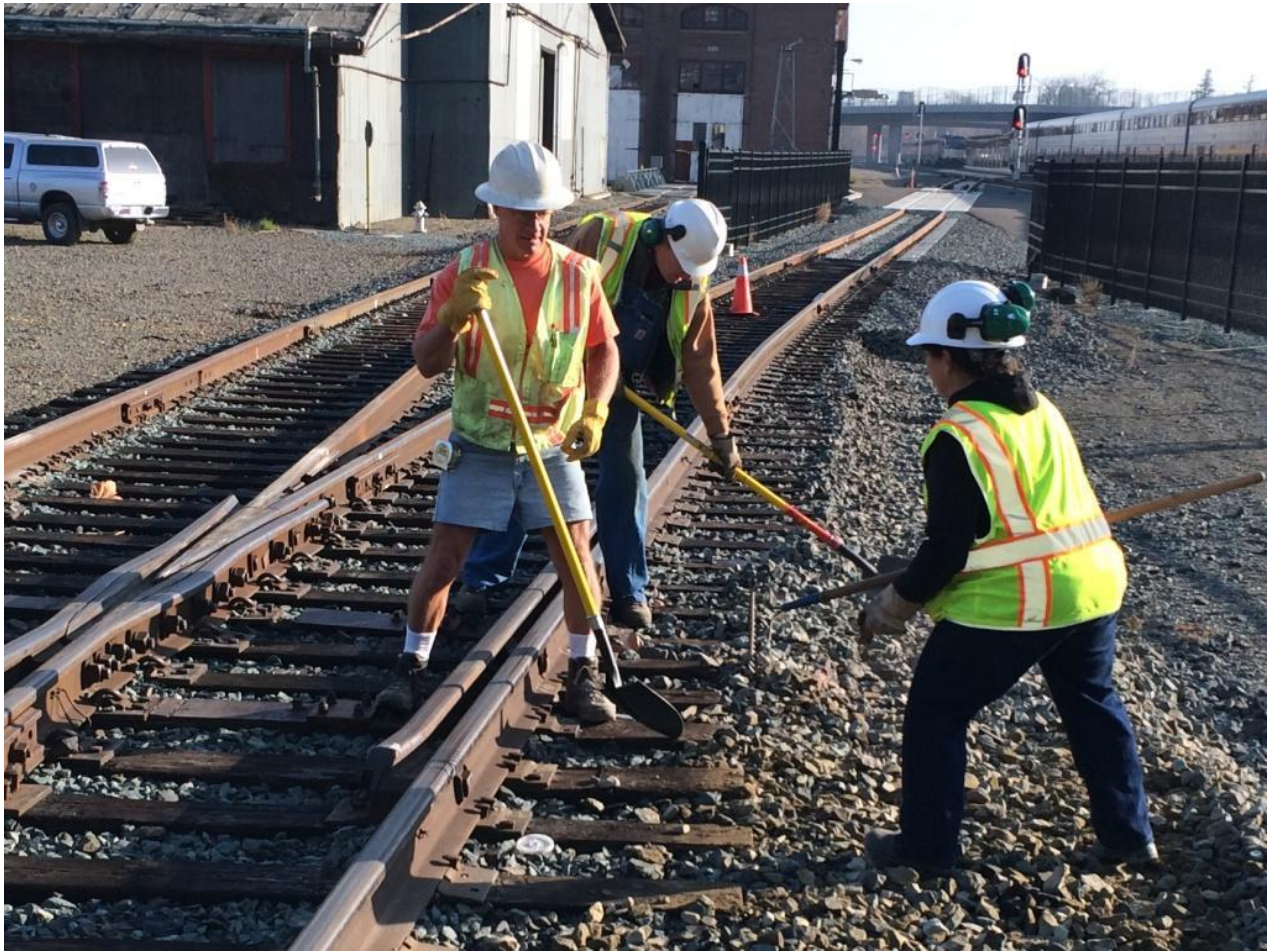
Saturday morning, Clem Meier, Alan, Heather, Fred, Chris Carlson, and Frank formed a doughnut circle just outside the Boiler shop. We were happy to welcome new Team member Joshua Ilac, a graduate of the most recent docent class, with an offering of doughnuts. With the pink box emptied, the Team headed out onto the line to address several maintenance issues brought to light by our trusty track inspectors in recent weeks. First stop: Switch 13, the ground-throw at the Clunie Crossover. During recent inspections, it's been noted that the machine slides around a bit on top of the head-blocks. So, we pulled the spikes from one head-block, adjusted the switch, and flooded the spike holes with a special epoxy designed for this purpose, plugged, and reset the spikes. Success! Next, we headed down the line to Mile Post 2.75 where several catawampus ties were squeezing the track slightly. Unfortunately, while using the tamper to straighten the ties, we discovered a broken weld on one of the guide rods on the right-side work-head. This is a major defect that puts the entire tamping mechanism out of service. With the Boiler Shop situation, we have no place to fix it (if it can be fixed). Meanwhile, inside the Boiler Shop, all work on the "new-old" tamper came to a screeching halt when the building was closed down. Once we are provided work space inside the Erecting Shop, our number one priority will be getting the "new-old" tamper ready for service out on the line. It's almost ready. The tamper is a critical component of our operation.

In the afternoon, the team finished spiking down the narrow gauge track on the turntable. We also responded to recent reports by freight crews that Switch 7, the turnout between the Old Main and South Turntable Lead, is difficult to throw. We conducted a thorough inspection of all its components. But, couldn't find anything structurally wrong with it. So we cleaned it up, removed the "organic debris," made sure there was nothing interfering with the points, and then greased it. When we finished, it was throwing rather well. However, **Brakemen of the railroad, here's your one warning: when operating Switch 7, wear gloves.** Switch grease can be insidious and tends to run when it gets warm.

For the week ahead, the Team will gather on Tuesday evening. We may head out on the line perhaps with the bolt machine. Thursday is cancelled again. But, another doughnut circle will form on Saturday morning at 8 o'clock a.m. The dead ties at Setzer are our priority. Again, many thanks to our incredible dedicated volunteers and our sympathies to Darlene.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Flashback: our friend Steve Mathias. This was typical of Steve. On a cold morning in December 2013, while everyone else on the Team was bundled-up in heavy coats, Steve donned a t-shirt and shorts. Here he is with Steve Nemeth and Pam Tato.

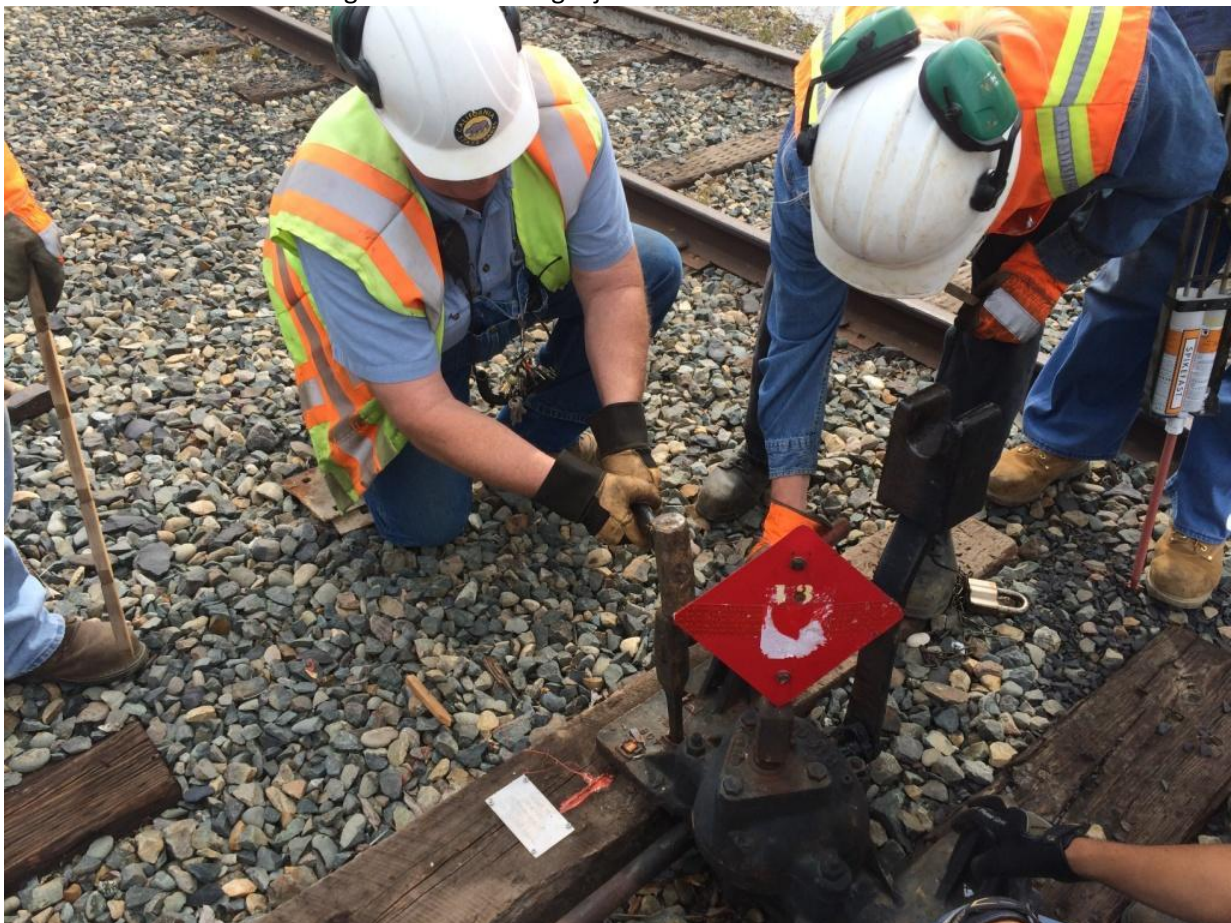


Frank, Clem, the Sacred Pink Box, Alan, Josh, Heather, Chris, and Fred conduct a morning briefing





Clem injecting epoxy in the spike holes. Considering the rapt attention of Fred, Alan, Josh, Frank, and Chris, one would think doughnuts were being injected into that head-block...



With the epoxy setting, Chris and Fred pound down spike-plug into the spike holes





More work on Switch 13: a bracket needed a little adjustment



Josh drives his first spike! Welcome to the MOW Team, Josh!





Back in town, the Team follows the MOW Credo to the letter: "Always park the motorcar in the shade..."

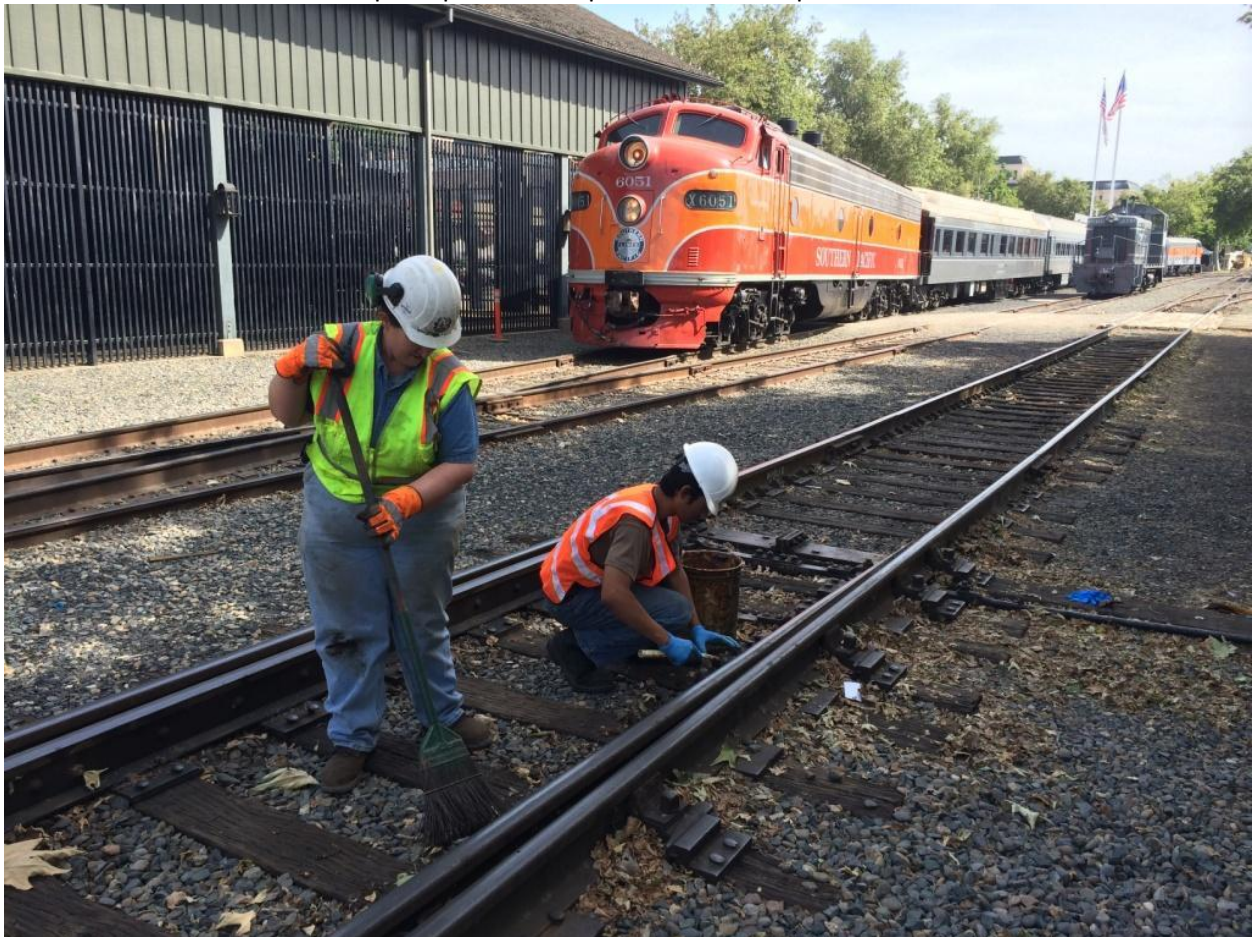


Chris nips the narrow gauge rail so that Alan and Fred can fit the tie-plates under the rail





Heather fires up the pneumatic spiker and drives spikes on the turntable



Heather and Josh clean and grease Switch 7