

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for June 11, 2017. Every day is one day closer to the Zoo, thanks to your MOW Team. Yes, it's becoming a reality: trains to the Zoo. All the exciting details follow right now in this week's installment of the MOW Team update!

A hot preview of the Sacramento summer greeted Joe Margucci, Heather Kearns, Mike Harris, Weston Snyder, Frank Werry, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, and Gene Peck. Joe finished the rewiring of the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. All the electrical component now feed into fuse-box. This will allow for more efficient and safer operation. Heather lead the Team in Old Sacramento to retrieve the rail-lifter, the 500-gallon spray-rig, and a flat car. The Weed Team is finished with the 500-gallon rig for the year and space is needed in the Old Sac. container. The rail-lifter shares a carriage with the track-gauger and, as the Team planned to use it on Saturday, it needed to return to the Shops to have the repaired gauger loaded onto it. Alan needed a flatcar in the Shops as he is building a cradle for it to hold dead ties so that they won't fall off. While Mike H., Weston, Frank, and Joe were switching all of the equipment in the container around, Heather worked to correct an issue with the stub-switch. Once the Team had everything switched and in the right position, Conductor Heather contacted Dispatcher 62 in Omaha to arrange the crossing and Engineer Mike H. put the A-6 motorcar in gear once the green signal-indication was showing. Over at the Shops, Frank on the forklift grabbed the spray-rig and moved it to its summer hibernation spot in the Boiler Shop. Weston brought the A-6 and flatcar into the Erecting Shop. And, with that, "Quitting time USA!" was announced and the evening came to an end.

Thursday, Alan, Heather, Joe, Frank, Weston, and Matt McCracken arrived for another evening of MOW fun. Joe and Weston made an important modification to the electrical system of the A-6 motor car. The motorcar's radio was tied-in directly to the battery. If the radio is left on by accident, the battery quickly dies. So, Joe and Weston rewired it through the ignition switch. This way, when the engine shuts down, so will the radio. Alan and Heather loaded and secured the gauger on its carriage. Weston then piloted the A-6 pulling the gauger for the ride back to Old Sacramento. The plan also called for bringing the tie-crane back to the Shops for a bit of maintenance. It was buried up on the old 150 Track behind the Kalamazoo tug, tamper, scarifier, and tie-shear. Frank moved the Kalamazoo, Matt took the tamper, and Heather shuffled the scarifier out of the way. Unfortunately, when Frank went to start the tie-shear, its battery was dead. Not even a click. So, we decided to start the tie-crane and jump the shear from the crane. But, you know, best laid plans and all that. The crane's battery was dead, as well. The jumper cables weren't long enough to try to jump either machine from the scarifier. We are plagued by battery issues! So, that part of plan was scrapped. But, Weston brought the A-6 and gauger over from the Shops which were stowed in the container. So, despite the battery issues, the key part of the plan – to send the A-6 and gauger back to Old Sac. – was accomplished making the evening a semi-success.

A chill descended over the Erecting Shop on Saturday morning. It felt more like February than June. But, a bright pink box filled with luscious doughnuts warmed the spirits of Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Ed Kottal, Harry Voss, Michael Florentine, Steve Nemeth, Heather, John Rexroth, Chris Machado, Chris Carlson, and Jose Gomez. The plan for the day was to re-gauge and spike the new ties along west rail of the Sutterville Line. But first, the Team headed to Switch 13, the south switch at Clunie. On Friday, our trusty track inspector, Frank, while inspecting the switch, discovered that something had hit the switch machine with such force that it twisted the handle making the switch inoperable. Folks, the handle on the switch machine is three-quarter inch thick steel. Fortunately, it was hit in the locked position so none of the switch components in the track were affected. But, to be on the safe side, we decided to clamp the points. Steve and Joe quickly installed the clamp and the Team was back on its way to the Zoo. On the Sutterville Line, Mike F. and Steve took gauge measurements and marked the problem areas. Narrow gauge is a serious problem on that line which is one reason why it's been off-limits to trains. Joe and Clem set spikes in the areas that were in gauge. Chris M., Ed, and Jose tried to deploy the gauger. Unfortunately, the improvised repair to the pull-start didn't hold-up and, it pulled-apart once again. So, they removed the cowling and tried wrapping a strap around the starter wheel to get the machine running. Alas, no bueno. So, the mechanical gauger was out of service. But, this Team adjusts on the fly and, instead, would gauge the track by hand. Gauging by hand, however, takes more time and slowed our progress. Heather, Chris M., Jose, and Harry, deployed the pneumatic spike driver and drove the spikes set by Joe and Clem. Ed piloted the Kalamazoo and shoved the compressor slowly north as the spiking progressed. Alan and Clem deployed the manual gauger which essentially is a screw-jack placed on the base of each rail which pushes the rails apart. This system works fine. It's just slow. After each section was re-gauged, Joe, Chris M., Heather, Steve, and Mike F. then set and drove spikes on the re-gauged rail.

This process continued throughout the afternoon. The manual-gauger was placed and gauge measured as the rails were pushed apart until they were right on target at 56 ½ inches. Each section being re-gauged was then spiked into place. Steve and Mike F. grew tired of using the newfangled pneumatic spike-driver and decided, instead, to interpret some old-fashioned railroading. They did a tandem spike-driving demonstration using spike-mauls and their world famous, as seen on TV, "windmill" spike driving technique. It was quite a show. But, it was time to pack-up and head back to the Shops. In Old Sac., Chris C. and Steve removed the dead battery from the tie-shear and loaded it on the truck. It will be recharged during the week. Although our progress was slowed by mechanical problems, we did get a significant section of the line re-gauged. Another attempt at repairing the gauger's 50 year old Wisconsin engine will be made but, replacement parts are proving very difficult to find. All in all, it was a good day – another day closer to trains running to the zoo.

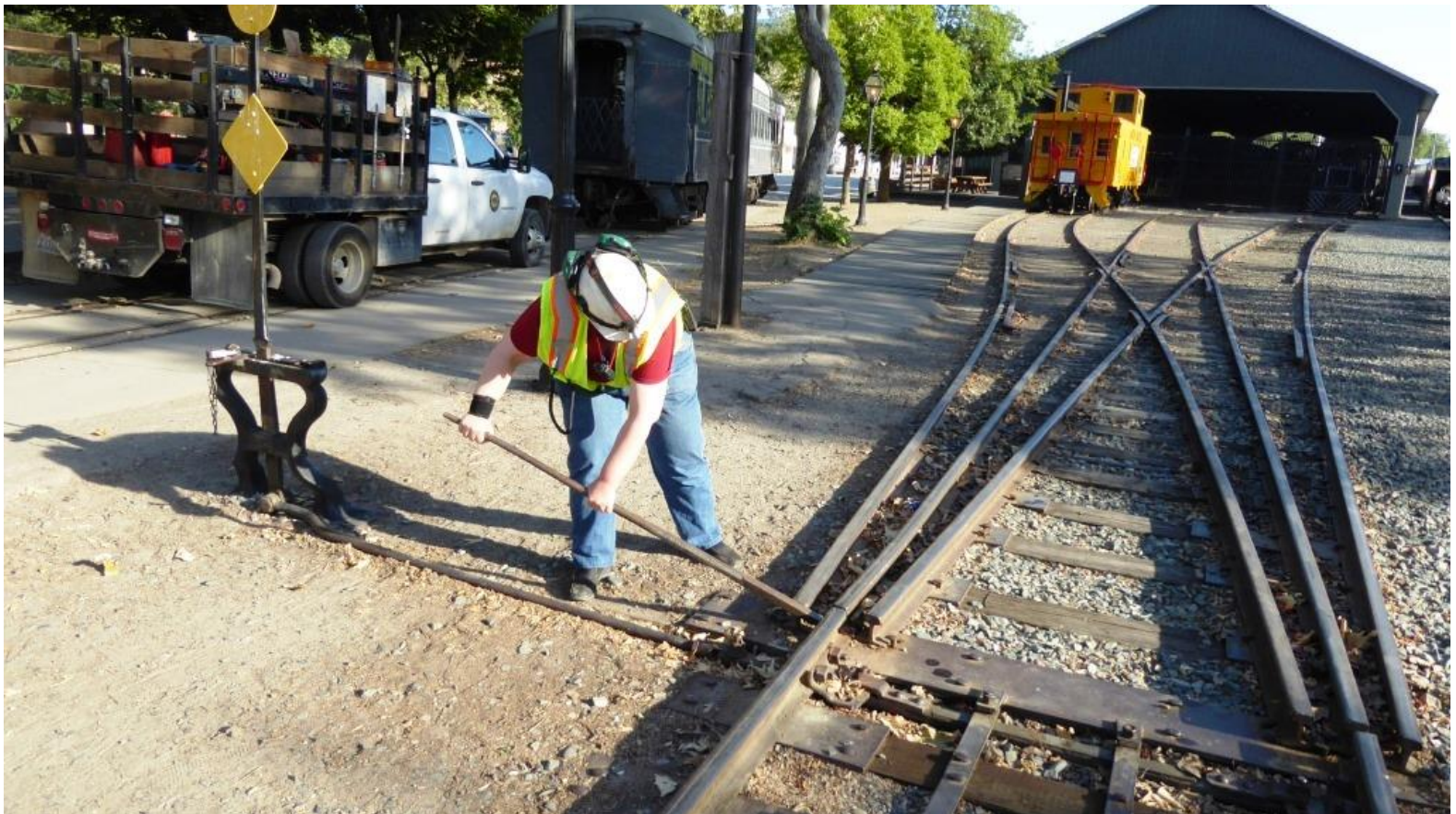
This coming week, the usual routine continues with the Tuesday and Thursday Teams gathering at the Shops at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday the doughnut box will make an appearance by 8 o'clock a.m. It promises to be a hot day but, we'll be under the shade of the trees along the Sutterville Line continuing with gauging and spiking efforts. Many thanks to the great folks of the MOW Team for their magnificent dedication!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Joe fires-up fully rewired Jackson 125 tie-exchanger and looks at it approvingly



Heather uses a little "elbow-grease" to make some adjustments to the stub-switch



Weston "calls the shove" as the spray-rig and rail-lifter carriage are moved onto the Old Main



Brakeman Joe, Conductor Heather, and Engineer Mike H. waiting for the green signal indication...



...And, there it is!



Frank moves the 500-gallon spray-rig to its summer storage spot



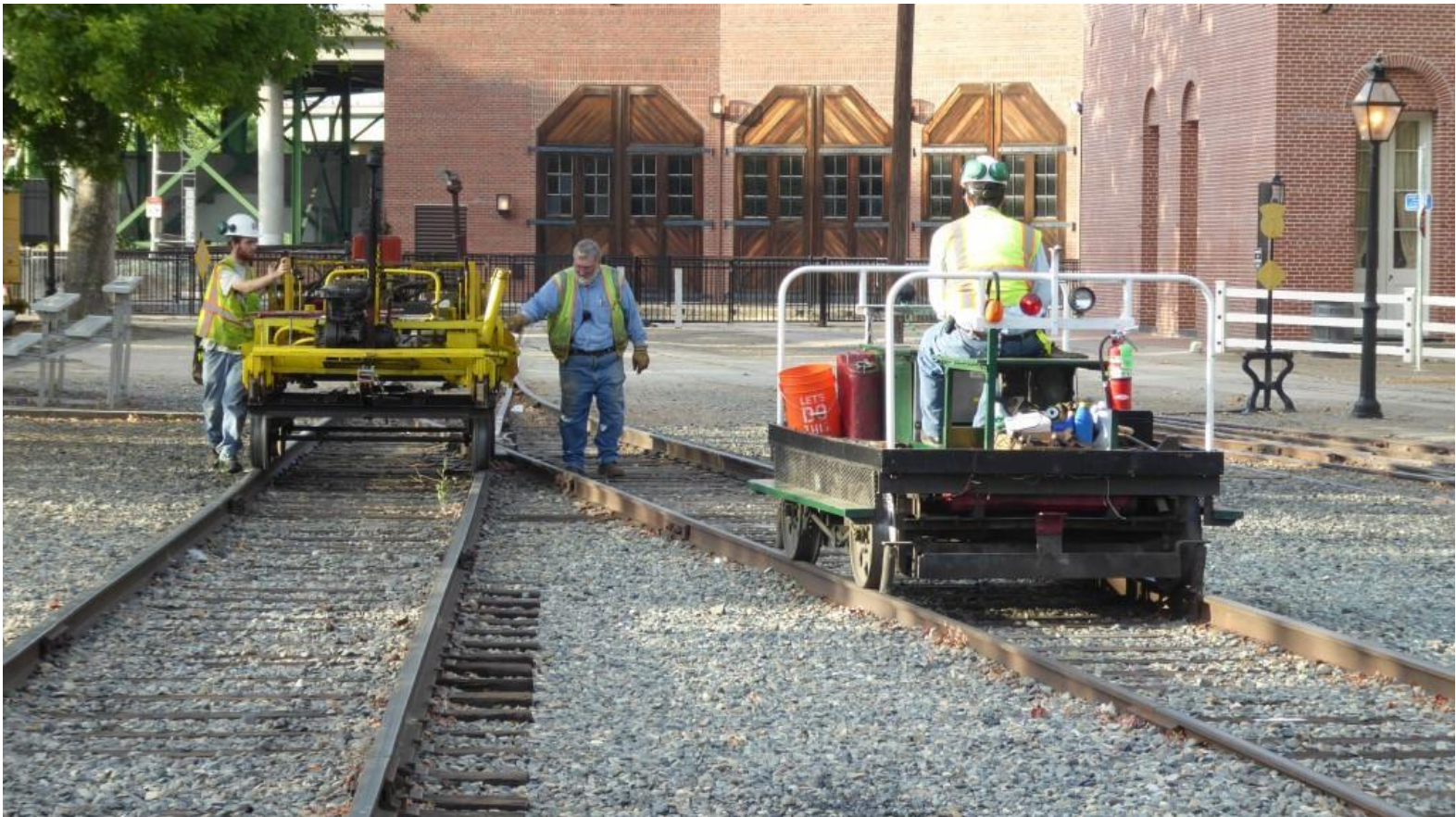
Joe and Weston rewire the radio into the ignition switch of the A-6 motorcar



Brakeman Joe guides Frank in the Kalamazoo to a stop



Engineer Weston pilots the A-6 over the UP Main



Matt and Frank provide the pushing-power for the gauger carriage during a run-around with the motorcar



Joe and Steve install a switch-point clamp on the east-point at Switch 13



Down on the Sutterville Line, Jose and Mike F., using the pipe-gauge (measurer), identify a narrow spot



Clearly, the pipe-gauge will not seat on the rail because the gauge is narrow so, Steve takes a measurement with a tape



Joe sets spikes in areas where the gauge is good





Ed and Chris M. remove the cowling on the mechanical gauger's pull-start after it pulled-apart...



Jose and Chris M. improvise a solution to the malfunctioning pull-start by wrapping a strap around the start-wheel



After several unsuccessful attempts at starting it with a strap, Chris M. implements a new strategy...



Chris M. takes the on the pneumatic spike-driver as Harry guides the air-hose



Ed skillfully pilots the Kalamazoo, shoving the air-compressor, and carefully watching for signals as to where to stop



Chris M. gives Ed in the Kalamazoo a "stop" signal as Jose and Harry guide the air-hose during the equipment move



Jose takes on the spike-driver



Mike F. nips the rail as Jose drives the spike while Clem handles air-hose duty



Clem deploys the manual gauger and tightens the nut on its screw-jack with a crescent wrench as Steve pulls spikes on nearby ties



Clem and Chris M. set the manual gauger near the where the pipe-gauge indicates narrow track



Mike F. and Steve plug spike holes in the ties where spikes were pulled to allow the necessary movement of the west rail back into gauge



Joe pulls spikes ahead of Mike F. and the manual gauger



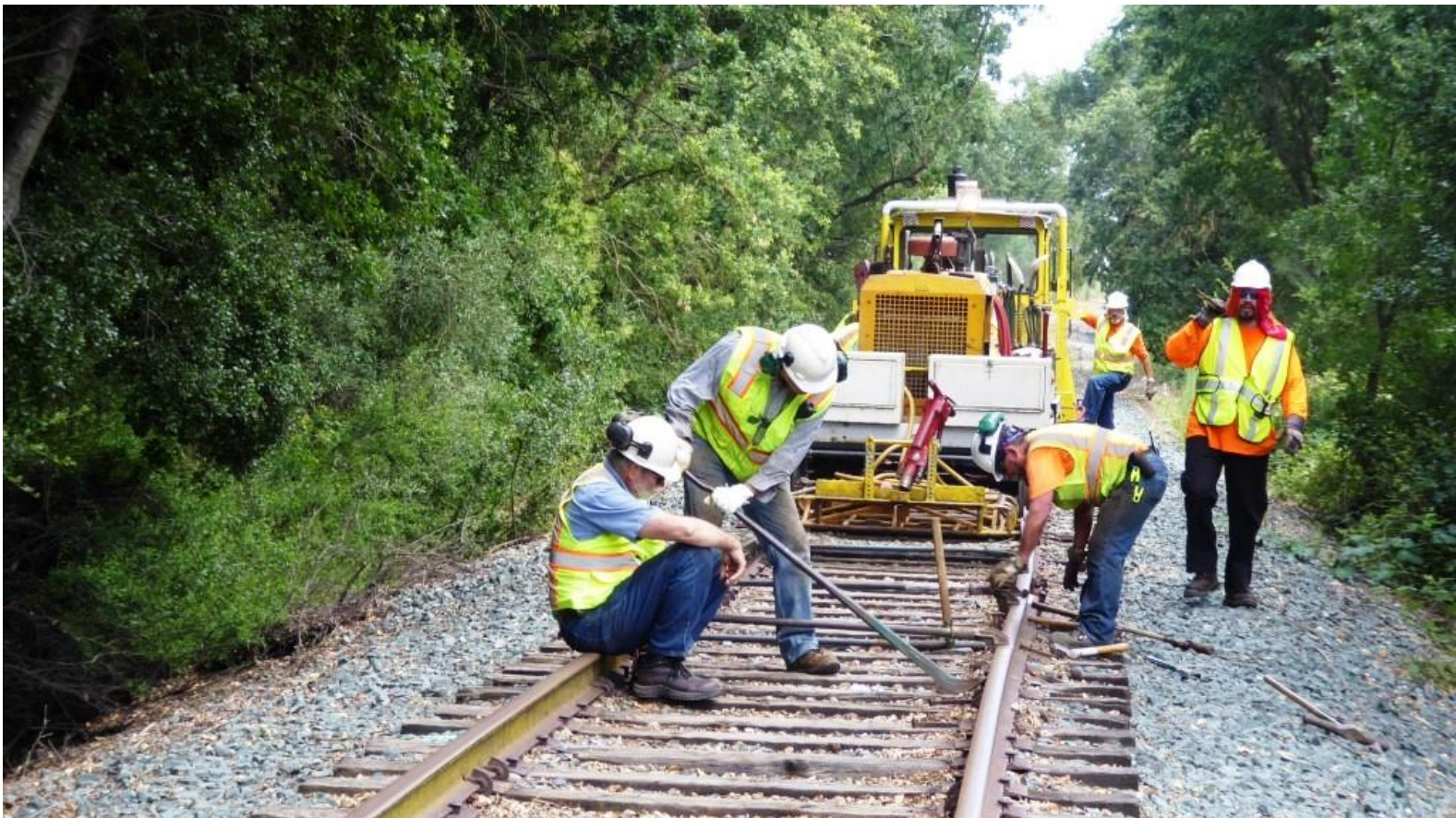
Steve and Mike continue with re-gauging the track...



...As Joe and Jose pull spikes in the old ties to allow the west rail to move when gauged

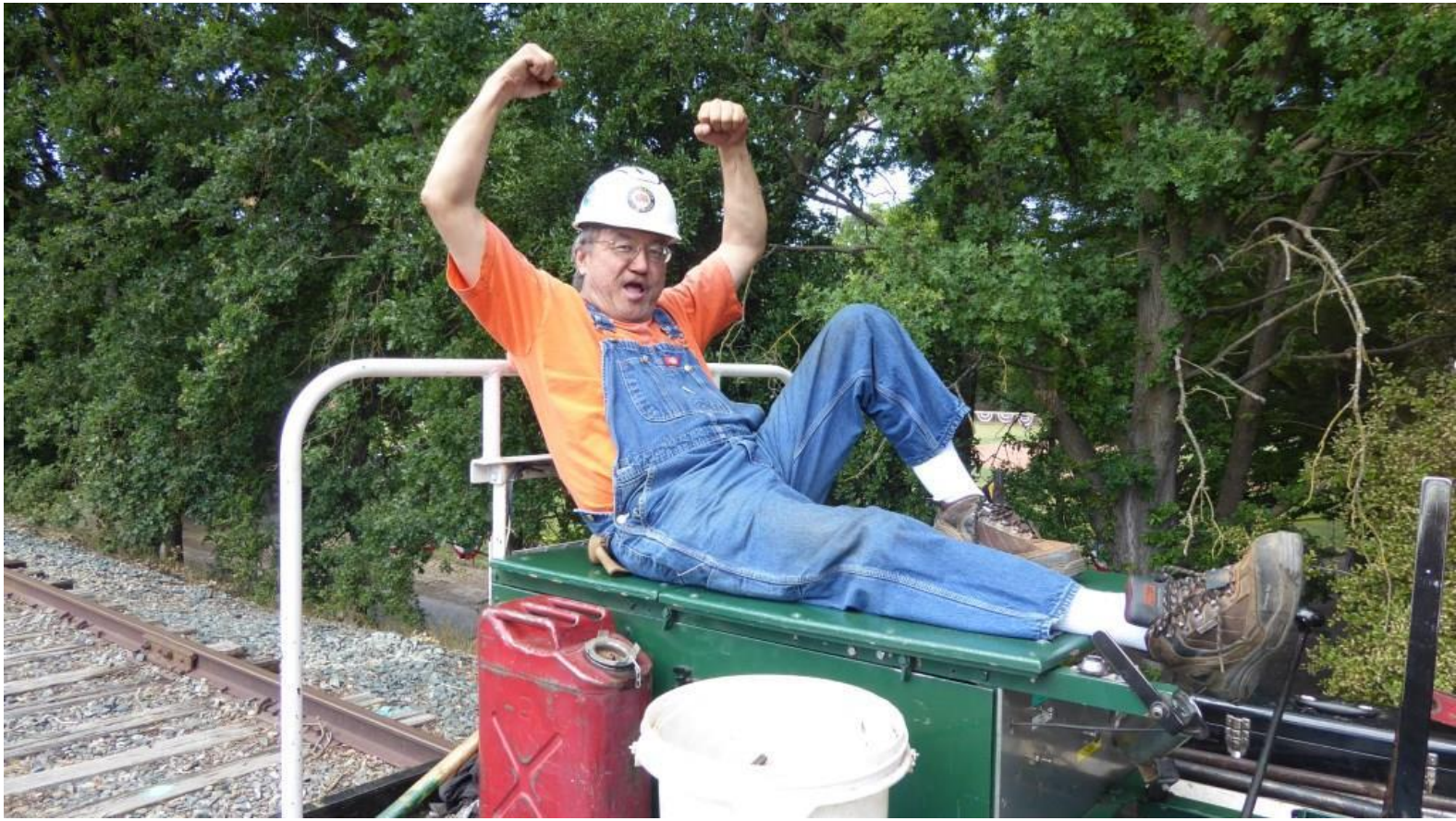


A meeting of the great MOW minds: Chris C., Joe, and Mike F. combine their cognitive powers to assess the condition of the gauge



As the afternoon wore on, gauging and spiking continued up the line





John, doing his famous, "I'm Batman!" impression, keeps the motorcar warm...



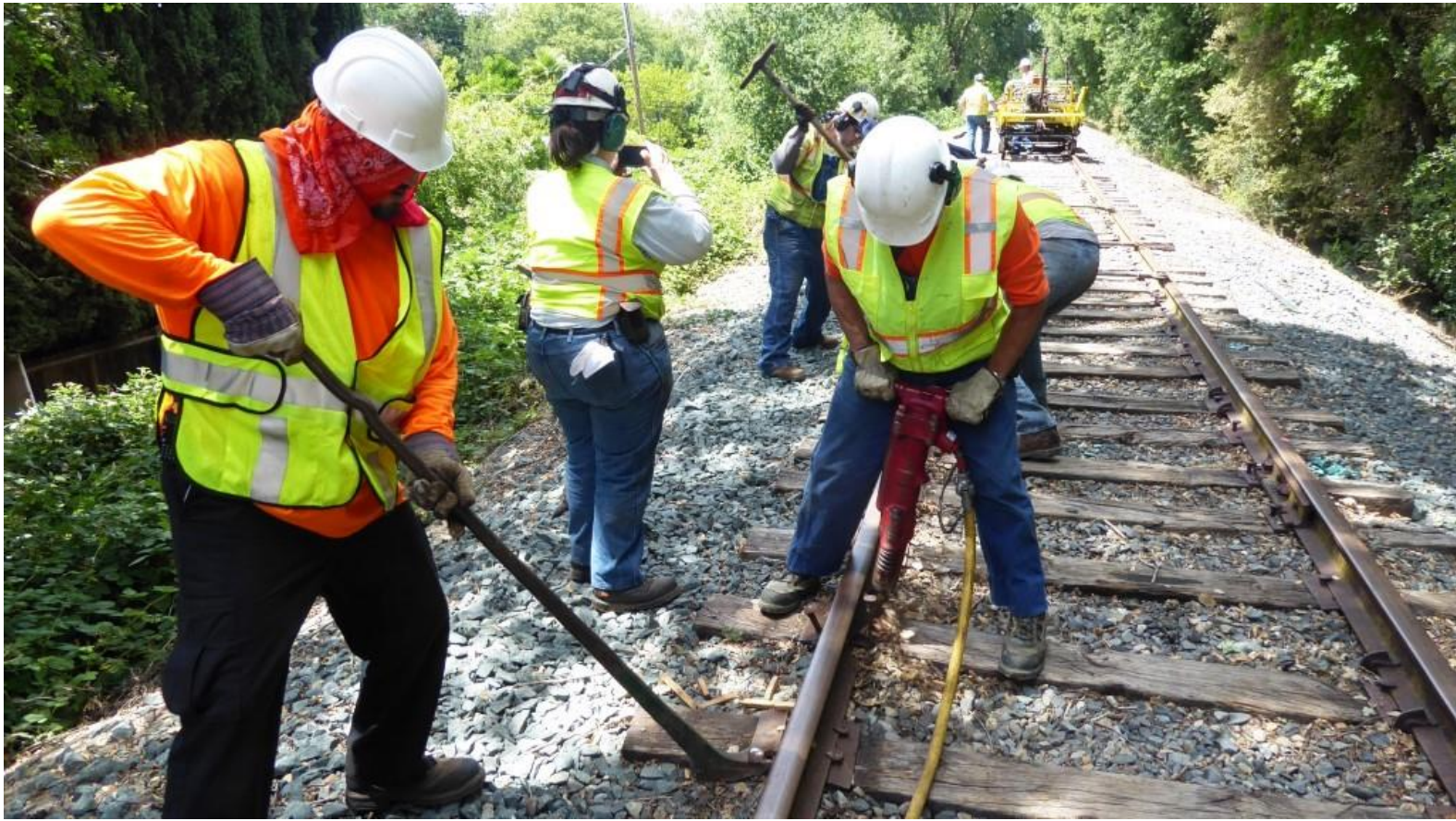
Now it's time for some good ol' fashion railroadin' by Steve and Mike F. who will demonstrate their tandem spike-driving technique



Steve and Mike F. are driving the same spike, hitting it in alternating swings of their spike-mauls



The interpreting continues...



Meanwhile, Ed and Jose interpret the modern style of driving spikes – with machines...



Although a bit tired, Steve and Mike F. were quite pleased with their efforts – and rightly so



And then they started in again on another spike...



At the end of the day, Chris C. and Steve removed the battery from the tie-shear for charging