

Greetings!

This is your MOW Team update for June 5, 2016. As the song says, "The heat is on! On and on!" And was it ever this week. Of course, that means summer is warming up and so is your MOW Team. So, before we cool down, let's get this update started.

There was a dearth of management at the Shops on Tuesday which meant Anthony Filamor, Cliff Hayes, Harry Voss, Joe Marcucci, Mike Harris, and Gene Peck got lots more done than usual. Cliff and Gene teamed up to make an additional repair on the ballast regulator's pivot arm. Gene did some research and discovered that structural failure of the pivot arms on Canron BEB-17 ballast regulators was a known design-flaw issue. In fact, Canron, the manufacturer, suggested the addition of a steel-strut between the base of the arm and the lift point. So, Cliff fabricated and welded the new piece in place. Thanks to Cliff's metallic mastery, this mechanism is now so strong that it won't dare break again. Joe is a master at the electrical arts and continued working on the wiring of the front-end loader. Mike H., Harry, and Anthony did lots of good stuff but, due to management's absence (paid-employment obligation) and deteriorating memory (needs a digital brain upgrade), details are unavailable at this time. Rest assured, it was good productive work and their dedication is to be commended.

Thursday, Anthony, Mike H., Joe, Ed Kottal, and Frank Werry braved the evening heat under the tin-roof of the Erecting Shop. Ed K. and Joe started off the evening replacing the broken keeper-pin that holds the socked on the orange bolt machine. Then Joe finished the wiring work on the loader and moved on to rebuilding the tire-mounted air-compressor's electrical connector. Anthony, Mike H., Ed K. and Frank loaded a 55-gallon drum of red-diesel onto our trusty Chevy Truck and headed over to Old Sacramento to fuel the equipment that would be deployed on Saturday. Frank moved the tamper to our regular fueling station in Old Sac. Mike H. and Ed K. got the pump set up and Anthony filled 'er up. Then the Team went to get the scarifier-inserter started-up in order to fuel it only to discover that its battery was dead. Dead as a vampire in the noon-day sun. Not even a "click, click, click." The only jumper cables we had were designed to work with a specialty plug on the truck which, because of its location, we could not get anywhere near the scarifier (otherwise, we'd jump it from the tamper). Because the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger was buried behind the scarifier, it could not be moved for fueling. So, we pulled the scarifier's battery and took it back to the Shops for charging, hopeful that could be brought back to life.

The heat was joined by high humidity on Saturday. But that didn't stop Chris Carlson, Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Harry, Ed K., Mike Willis, Steve Nemeth, Anthony, Frank, Joe, John Rexroth, and Ed Moriarty from enjoying the contents of a big pink box of sugary goodness. The plan for the day was to correct a defect to the north of Switch 17, the north switch at Bath. Five ties in a row, including both ties under a joint, had deteriorated badly. But first, our prayers had been answered and the scarifier's battery had been re-animated. In Old Sac., the prior evening's "Hell On Wheels" event required different cars be used on that special train. So, on Saturday morning, as the Team set-up equipment in old Sacramento, the train crew rearranged the excursion train's consist to its proper order. The result of both the train crew and MOW Team occupying the same tracks delay us slightly getting to Baths. But, both crews worked incredibly well together and soon, we were on our way. At Baths, Anthony began by pulling spikes (most of which could be pulled-out by hand). Clem and Mike W. dug-away ballast from the ends of ties. Chris came in with the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger and, in a flash, had all four ties out of the ground. Pam and Clem removed the debris. John, Joe, Steve, and Ed K. brought new ties over and set them for insertion. Next, the scarifier pulled the new ties under the rails with Chris and Joe guiding them. Because we were working by the bike-path, Harry took up station in truck bed and acted as "look-out" to prevent any unpleasantness with the spandex-clad. Joe, Clem, Mike W., Ed M., and Pam placed the plates and set spikes. Of course, it wouldn't be a tie change-out without Steve demonstrating his world-famous as-seen-on-TV windmill spiking technique. Chris and Ed K. nipped the ties as Frank, Joe, Clem, Mike W., and Ed M. continued spiking. Steve brought in the tamper to straighten and tamp the new ties we installed. With that, it was train time and the Team moved all equipment south onto the I-5 bridge. The point of the operation was to correct a legal defect (49CFR Part 213.109(b)&(e)). It was not a general tie change-out operation. Four ties were removed, replaced, plated, spiked, and tamped all within 45 minutes. Kudos to the incredible, talented, and skilled MOW Team for a job well done.

In the afternoon, the Team ventured out on the line to continue servicing switches and take an inventory of switch-ties that need replacing. We're in the process of obtaining new ties and wish to include various lengths of switch-ties as part of that order. While at the switches, Joe, Steve, and Anthony removed debris and slathered viscous grease in all the appropriate places. Then, the Team then replaced a broken joint bolt in a joint where the thermal expansion had caused a misalignment of the bolt-holes. With a bit of cajoling, the Team lined everything up and Steve installed a new bolt. By 3:30, however, the humidity had worn us out. So, with everybody well cooked, the Team headed back to the shops and called it a day. But, it had been a good day with lots of accomplishment as we strive to build a better railroad.

And now, a special shout-out and thank you to our good friend Dusty Galland of the Mechanical and Restoration Shops. He is a master carpenter and fabricated new brake-shoe separators for our motorcars. These specialty items are no longer available for purchase so Dusty volunteered his skills and materials to make new ones out of oak wine barrels giving them a lovely burgundy patina. Thank you Dusty!

This coming week, the roll-up doors on the Erecting Shop will be rolled-up at or before 5 o'clock on Tuesday and Thursday. Saturday, the MOW Team will convene in joint convention with the Mighty Weed Team for a day of tree pruning below the I-5 Bridge. Some track work is also planned. It should be a hoot. Don't miss it. Meet at the Erecting Shop at 8 o'clock a.m. There will be doughnuts! Thanks to all!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



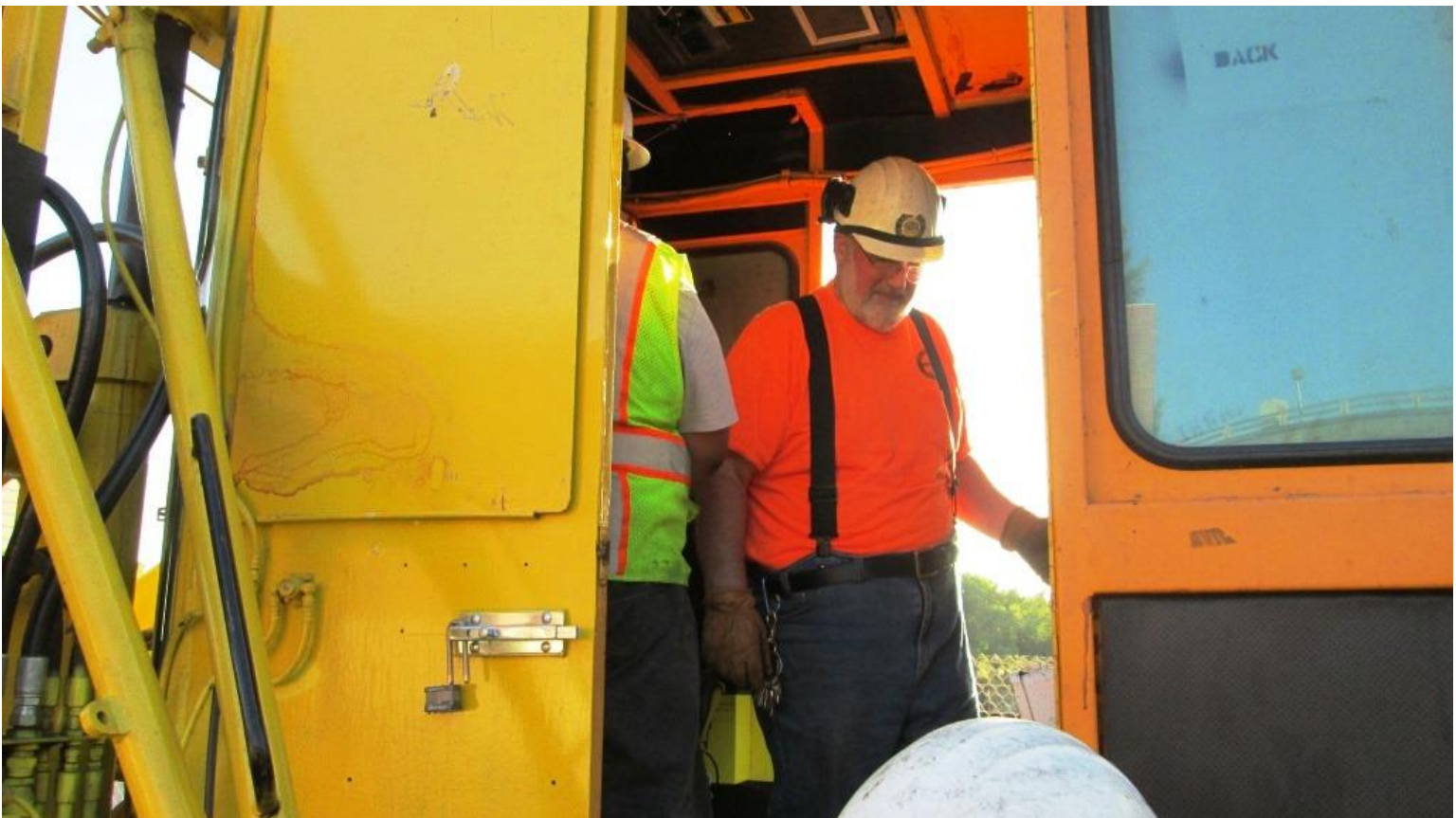
The modified pivot-arm complete with the new steel-strut, fabricated by Cliff, between the base of the arm and the lift point



Ed replaces the keeper pin on the bolt machine at the socket



Anthony on the forklift with a 55-gallon drum of red-diesel



Frank firing-up the tamper



Mike H. and Ed K. set up the fuel pump



Fill 'er up! Anthony fuels the tamper



Anthony pulls a spike



Frank keeps rock from mounding at the end of the tie that Chris is pulling with the Jackson 125



Clem and Pam remove the remnants of the pulled ties. As you can see, they kind of disintegrated as they were pulled



John and Joe set a new tie for insertion



The view from inside the scarifier as Joe guides the insertion of a tie



Ed M. sets a spike as Chris nips the tie



And now Steve demonstrates his world famous windmill spike-driving technique as Chris nips the tie



"How does he do that?" Clem takes a close look at the spike maul Steve used to drive that last spike





Now, it's Frank's turn at spiking



Frank and Ed K. nip the ties as Joe and Mike W. drive spikes



Now it's John's turn. Again, Chris nips and John spikes



We've come full windmill with Steve driving more spikes while Ed K. nips the tie



Harry on the look-out for spandex...



It's train time!



Back in town, the Team gets the equipment put away



Chris, with oil-can in hand, oils the switch-machine while Joe scrapes gunk off the switch-plates



Joe applies grease to the plates while Steve scrapes off more gunk



With the switch serviced, Steve tests the operation of the ground-throw switch #13



Steve tightens down a new bolt in a track joint



Master carpenter Dusty made these new brake-shoe separator from oak wine barrels