

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team up date for July 16, 2017. The MOW Team adventure continued this week with all kinds of adventurous accomplishments. So, let's keep the adventure going right here by getting this update started ASAP.

Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Weston Snyder, Matt McCracken, Mike Taylor, Joe Margucci, Gene Peck, Heather Kearns, Frank Werry, and Alan Hardy began this week's MOW adventure on Tuesday. You may recall that, a few weeks ago, the rail-mounted air-compressor went kablooiie (official terminology). So, Pat and Gene, who are expert diesel mechanics, took on the challenge of diagnosing the problem. It didn't take them long to determine that the machine has several problems. With the major problems now diagnosed, Heather ordered the parts we need to get it running again soon. Mike T. installed a new clutch on the Weed Team's field-and-brush mower. Frank and Weston took on a problem with the yellow forklift which had stopped working. Joe began the process of installing a new air-compressor on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. While he did that, Matt descended into the pit below the 125 to change its oil. Cliff built anti-vandal shields for the 125's new air-horn. Once Matt finished with the 125's oil-change, he put the Kalamazoo tug's engine cowling put back together after having been removed for an inspection. It's returning to Old Sacramento so needed its engine cowling in place. Phewww, what an evening of exciting adventure.

Thursday started early for Heather. She hopped in the MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck and headed to Stockton where she picked-up the newly rebuilt Detroit 3-53 diesel engine we ordered for the Kalamazoo tug. It's a thing of beauty and is ready to be installed. At the Shops, Joe also arrived early to continue installing the new air-compressor on the Jackson 125. Frank, Alan, Weston, and Chris soon showed up to join in the fun. The Kalamazoo had to go over to Old Sacramento to make room in the Shops for the tamper which would be needed on Saturday for the Firing Line track extension project. To give the tamper access to the new track, a boxcar and one of "Santa's Village" flatcars, which are stored on the old Firing Line, had to be moved. Restoration Shops manager, Al Dipaolo and his team agreed to move them on Friday. As storage space is at a premium at the Shops, the only place to put them was the Transfer Table Lead which would block rail access to and from Old Sacramento. So the tamper had to come over on Thursday. Weston, Frank, and Joe took on this move. Engineer Weston and Conductor Frank quickly got the Kalamazoo in place for a crossing over the UP Mainline. Joe headed to Old Sacramento where he opened up the tamper and spotted it further down the line to switch-out for the Kalamazoo. These guys are virtuosos at equipment moves and soon had the tamper put to bed in Bay 5 of the Erecting Shop. Chris, meanwhile, climbed aboard the backhoe and spent the evening hauling 15-loads of rock from the pile under the freeway to work site. No one could deny that it was a productive evening.

With the anticipation of a big pink box filled with yummy doughnut goodness on Saturday morning, Joe, Clem Meier, Ed Kottal, Frank, Mike Miller, Harry Voss, Chris, Heather, and Alan brought the Shops to life. Temperatures were predicted to crest the century mark as the Team continued work on the Firing Line extension project. We'd deploy the rail-mounted spiker on Saturday for the first time in a long while. So Joe, Alan, and Clem made a few adjustments and serviced it before taking it out. Harry climbed on the backhoe to continue bringing in ballast rock. Mike M., Joe, Frank, and Ed grabbed shovels and spread the rock about between the ties then shoveled it out of the backhoe's bucket directly to fill in areas. Chris and Alan checked the gauge and found a few areas where we were narrow. So, track-jacks were brought in and placed horizontally opposing each other to spread the rails. Mike M. cranked on the jacks to bring everything into gauge. Spikes were then set in every fifth tie or so to hold gauge. Ed brought the tire-mounted air-compressor over with the yellow forklift and Chris broke-out the 90-lb. spike driver (meaning, the thing weighs 90-pounds) and started driving the set spikes the rest of the way. Joe was desperate to get a shot at using the 90-lb. spike driver so, as Ed nipped-up the rail, Joe drove spikes. Ed became green with envy and demanded that he get a chance to drive spikes with the 90-lb. spike driver, too, so they traded jobs. With enough spikes now driven to hold gauge, Chris fired-up the tamper and took it onto the line for a thorough initial tamping. As the tamper passed by, Ed, Joe, Mike M., and Clem shoveled more rock around ties for the next round of tamping. Next, Clem, Mike M., and Joe placed tie-plates at each un-spiked tie while Ed tightened down a few bolts at joints.

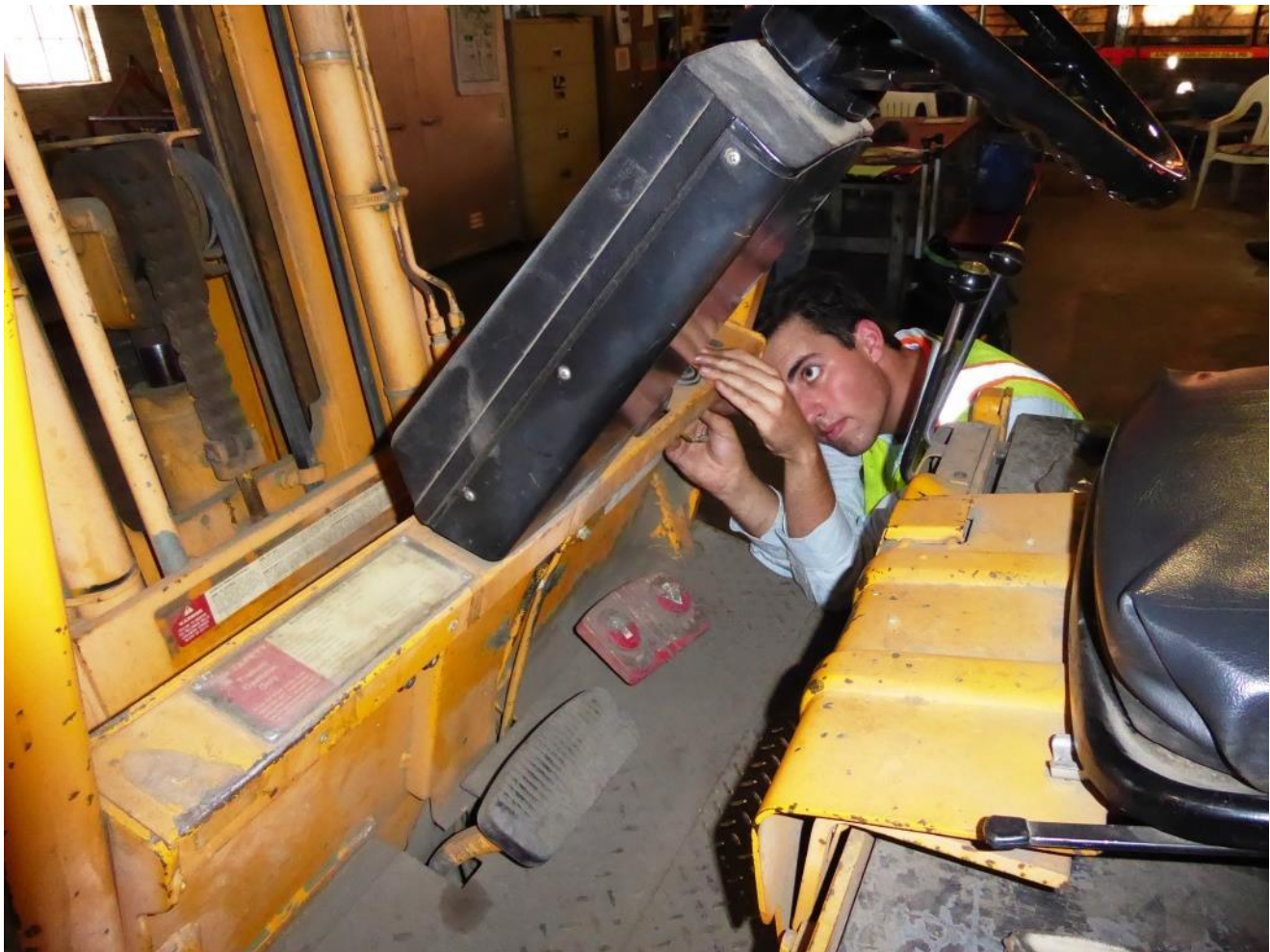
Following lunch, the Team deployed the spiker. This machine, when working, makes it possible to drive spikes at a quick clip without having to wield the heavy pneumatic spike drivers (and will save our backs). The spiker takes three people to operate. Alan, Joe, and Heather filled the bill. It took a bit of time to get used to the controls and feel of the machine but soon, they were at it like old-pros. One issue we still have with the machine is that spikes tend to jam in the shoots. So, Chris and Mike M. worked alongside as necessary unjamming it. Ed hopped on the backhoe and continued transporting ballast-rock to the track. It takes a heap of rock to ballast a track. Then the tamper was brought in again for a second tamping of the line. By now, it was 3:30 and 104-degrees. So, the Team packed up its tools and put its machines away. Although we still have a little work left to do on it – leveling, surfacing, and lining – the track is serviceable. It's a job well-done by an outstanding Team that works in the most challenging conditions (heat) – and keeps coming back! What's that they say about "mad-dogs and Englishmen?"

The lovely and talented Ramsay at the All Aboard Desk has released the latest list of hour-bar recipients which included several folks from Maintenance of Way. Chris Machado with 500 hours; Matt Blackburn with 1,500 hours; and Al Utzig with a whopping 11,000 hours! Many thanks to Chris M., Matt B., and Al, as well as all CSR, SSRR, Signal Department, and MOW volunteers for all their hard work and dedication!

This coming week, the Team will convene as usual on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at or before 5 o'clock. The Weed Team reconvenes from its summer recess on Thursday, as well. To beat the heat, start time is 7 o'clock a.m. Saturday, the final push on the Firing Line project will commence at 8 o'clock a.m. To the incredibly dedicated volunteers of the MOW Team who came out to work despite the heat, thank you!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Weston working to resolve a wiring issue with the forklift



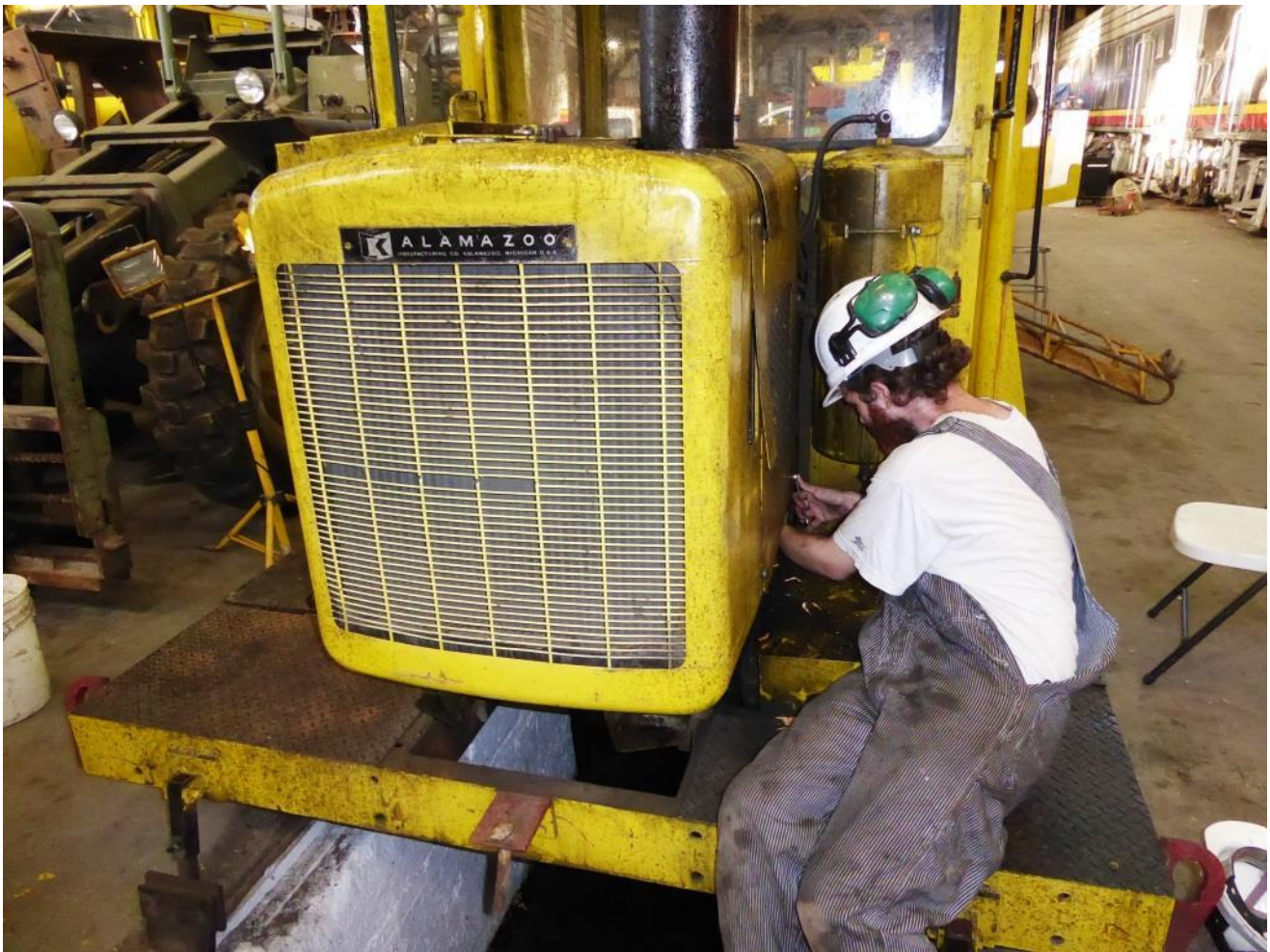
Matt, under the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, changes the oil



Cliff welds-up new anti-vandalism shields for the air-horn on the Jackson 125



Frank and Weston continue their efforts on the forklift



Matt puts the Kalamazoo's cowling back together



Heather with the new Detroit 3-53 she picked up from being rebuilt in Stockton



Engineer Weston and Conductor Frank bring the Kalamazoo over from the Shop



Engineer Joe gets a quick green signal indication and is off!



Chris gets a bucket-load of ballast rock for the Firing Line extension track



Chris moved 15 loads of rock to the extension track on Thursday evening



Joe and Alan make an adjustment to one of the spiking rams on the spiker



Clem adds hydraulic fluid to the spiker's hydraulic tank



Frank and Ed moving ballast-rock about to fill-in holes and spread it evenly



Mike M. cranks on a track-jack to lift the rail slightly so that a tie-plate can be placed





Harry on the back-hoe brings in more rock to fill-in along the field-side of the rail



Alan and Clem engage in some precision ballasting



Clem and Frank pull rock out of the back-hoe's bucket to fill-in around the ties



While Ed nips-up the tie, Chris drives a spike with the 90-lb. pneumatic spike-driver



Now it's Joe's turn at the 90-lb. spike driver



Chris nips-up the tie for Ed who couldn't wait for his chance at the 90-lb. spike driver



Time to tamp! Chris brings in the tamper as Alan provide direction from the ground



Heather and Joe work ahead of the tamper to make sure there's plenty of rock to be squeezed under the tie



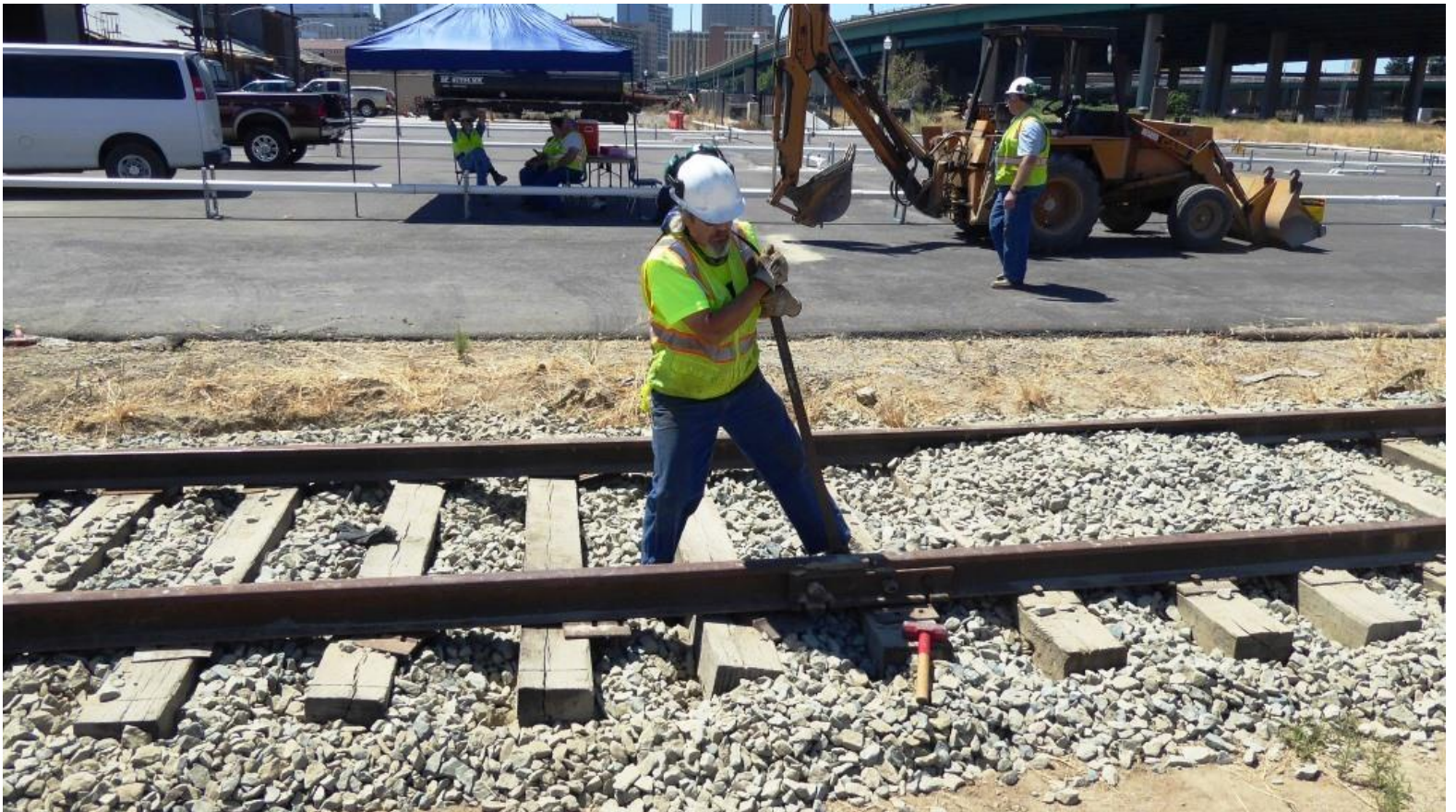
The work-heads descend deep into the ground around the tie to squeeze rock under it



Chris at the controls of the tamper



After the initial tamping, Clem, Ed, Joe, and Mike M. work behind the tamper to add more rock for the next round



Ed tightens up some loose bolts



Joe clears the flange-ways of the old Firing Line track to remove any impediments that might impede the spiker's progress



Alan at the controls of the spiker



Heather operating the system that feeds the spikes to the spiking rams



Heather, Joe and Alan soon get the routine down and get the rest of the ties spiked with the spiker