

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 17, 2014. You know, Maintenance of Way is as much about the camaraderie, and genuine friendship of the outstanding folks who come out to work on the line as it about maintaining machines and track work. The challenges we faced this week reinforced the familial nature of our happy band of volunteers. So, as our hearts are pure and our cause is just, let's get you updated on the good people who, despite the challenges, come together with the common goal of having a good time while building a better railroad.

On Tuesday, MOW Team members Ed Moriarty, Pat Scholzen, Bob Ress, Mike Harris, Josh Ilac, Heather Kearns, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, Frederick Carr, Chris Carlson, and Alan Hardy brought the Erecting Shop to life. While Chris and Alan were occupied with the monthly Shops management meeting, Pat and Gene evaluated the condition of the Tie Shear's hydraulic drive motor. The theory has been that the drive motor failed. However, their evaluation proved otherwise. More investigation will follow. Mike H. continued the hydraulic system rebuild of the Kalamazoo Tug. Talk about a puzzle. Bob and Frank focused on the restoration of the new-old tamper's light reference system. Heather, Fred, Josh, and Ed headed over to Old Sacramento to deal with one of our flatcars that, somehow, managed to break-free from its moorings and derail. Our resourceful team managed to re-rail it by hand.

Thursday, Harry Voss, Alan, Heather, Frank, and Mike H. populated the Shops. Again, Mike H. continued to preserve on the hydraulic rebuild of the Kalamazoo. One completed, the tug will become one of our most valuable pieces of equipment and Mike is making it possible. Heather and Frank staged for our planned operation on Saturday by fueling-up the scarifer-inserter and old-old tamper over in Old Sacramento. Alan and Harry teamed-up on the new-old tamper's light reference system.

For the past month, the MOW Team has focused its efforts on the mainline at Miller Park. Our trusty track inspectors had been monitoring the effective distribution of good ties throughout the area for some time. At Maintenance of Way, we don't do things haphazardly – especially major projects like this. We put together a systematic plan to make sure that the track is in a condition that is well above the minimum federal standard. The effective distribution of good ties is an important aspect of maintaining a strong and safe track. So, Saturday, Alan, Clem Meier, Steve Nemeth, Harry, Ed, Frank, Mike Miller, Michael Florentine, Fred, and Chris arrived extra early to continue this project. Of course, the Team was accompanied by a sufficient supply of doughnuts. Our track equipment was fired up and ready to roll by 7:20 a.m. At the work site, the ties destined for replacement were marked and the section-gang machine deployed to start pulling. They don't always come out in one piece often splintering into hundreds of pieces. Chains, shovels, mattocks, and other such apparatuses were necessary to remove all the remnants. But, we persevered and, with the help of the scarifer-inserter, we had the sufficient number of ties replaced by the time the first train of the day. It was an amazing team effort to get this job done and the defect corrected without any disruption to train operations. One might actually conclude that we know what we're doing...

Joining us on Saturday were our friends from the Signals Department. Paul Helman, Bill Meyers, Mike Gaulke, and Dale Parker were conducting monthly inspections of the grade-crossing systems. As the crossing at Front Street fell without the MOW Team's established work limits, the Signals folks were able to do their jobs under our track protection. See, we did pay attention during Part 214 Training!

In the afternoon, Chris and Harry returned to the work-site to make some remedial repairs to the old-old tamper. Then, in between trains, they tamped up all the ties we had changed out. In shops, Clem, as our motorcar expert, continued his efforts at restoring to operation the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar/speeder. Alan and Fred worked on the new-old tamper. Steve, Frank, and Mike F. unloaded section-gang machine from the truck because the Mighty Weed Team will be using it on Tuesday. More on that in a minute. Then, they headed down the line to work with Chris and Harry. By the end of the day, everyone was quite pleased with our productivity.

In other news, three-cheers to several of our Team members who have achieved hour-bar recognition. Fred: 500 hours, Ed: 2,500 hours, Joe Galipeau: 3,500 hours, and Mike H.: 5,000 hours! Well done and many thanks for your dedicated service. Also, undoubtedly you've noticed the beautiful new fence around the turntable. Well, it was designed and the project was managed by MOW Team member and volunteer Museum civil engineer, Harry Gbler. It's spectacular – an incredible – and functional – improvement over what was there. Excellent job, Harry! Finally, the MOW Team would like to recognize Al DiPaolo, and congratulate him on his promotion to restoration specialist/chief mechanical officer. It's a well-deserved promotion. As always, we look forward to working our friends at the north end of the building – or is it now the south end? In any event, congratulations to all!

This coming week, the Mighty Weed Team will reconvene after its summer recesses. They'll travel to Hood to resume mowing and pulling remaining star-thistle. Meet at the old shop at 8:30 AM with plenty of water and a large lunch. In the evening on Tuesday and Thursday, the Shops will be open at 5 o'clock ready to welcome all who wish to join us. Saturday, we have few more spots in Miller Park to address. Meet at the Shops at 8 a.m. You know there will be doughnuts. Again, thanks all the great folks who work with the MOW Team. It's your efforts that keep the trains running. Always remember, no track, no trains.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike H. deciphers the chaos that is the hydraulic plumbing of the Kalamazoo



By 7:15 a.m. on Saturday, the entirety of the MOW Team's (operational) track equipment was ready to roll



The sacred pink box arrives on scene...



Steve, Ed, Fred, Mike M., Mike F., and Chris set up the section-gang machine's chains to remove a splintering tie



Alan uses the adz to chip away at a plate-cut tie in order to make it easier to slide out from under the rails



Ed guides the insertion of a new tie by the scarifer-inserter under Alan's capable hands



Ed and Frank use the truck's crane to get the section-gang machine off the track.



Frank "nips" the tie as Fred sets spikes



Frank and Mike F. "nip-up" the new tie as Steve drives the spikes with pneumatic spiker



Harry takes the job of doughnut security quite seriously...



Our Signals Department comrades, Dale Parker, Bill Meyers, Mike Gaulke, and EIC Paul Helman conducting their monthly inspection at Front Street working under our “protection.” See, we did pay attention in our 49 CFR Part 214 training!



Mike F. and Steve bring the A-6 motorcar home