

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for September 11, 2016. Everyone got shook-up with some big-time jack-hammer action on Saturday as your MOW Team began dismantling the concrete over the tracks near the turntable. So, let's get the update started before all our teeth rattle out!

The Shops were buzzing with activity on Tuesday as Pat Scholzen, Anthony Filamor, Frank Werry, Weston, Snyder, Alan Hardy, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, and Joe Margucci arrived for some MOW fun. Anthony and Weston continued their artistic endeavor of painting the new signal cabinets. Joe is undertaking a major re-wiring and electrical project on the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar and bench car. Over in the Boiler Shop, the second Big Green Machine has been sidelined for the past couple of years with what has been diagnosed as a transmission deficiency. The engine works great. It's just that the machine just doesn't move. So, Mike H. has taken on the job of determining an appropriate solution to this malfunction. Tuesday, he was working on the machine as well as studying its schematics in order to come up with options for its repair. Stay tuned for more on this in the coming weeks.

Thursday started early for Heather Kearns and Mike Taylor. Government safety regulations require the mighty MOW track-mounted man-lift to be inspected annually by a certified crane inspector. Every year, the crane inspector is amazed by this machine, custom made by the MOW Team in the Shops. This year, the inspector brought an associate with him to see it, as well. Of course, the man-lift passed its inspection with flying colors. It's a great machine and the envy of the railroad world.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Anthony, Ed Kottal, Joe, Frank, Mike H., Weston, and Alan got revved up for more MOW fun. Mike H. continued his efforts with the second Green Machine. He and Ed got the engine started and did some other tests. Also, the hydraulic reel on the Kalamazoo tug, which is used to power hydraulic tools, was leaking so Ed and Mike H. took it apart to replace the leaky fittings. Weston, Anthony, and Alan worked on fitting-out the signal cabinets that will be used to store our electric power-tools. They installed the battery rechargers. Heather and Joe headed over to Old Sacramento to adjust the brakes on the A-6 motorcar. As brake-shoes wear, the rigging needs to be adjusted to compensate. Also, they replaced a torn shunting-wire, which triggers the signals at grade crossings, on its wheel. They then tested the motorcar's stopping capabilities as well as its ability to trigger the signals at Capitol Mall. Of course, both ventures were highly successful and they certified the motorcar ready to roll.

Saturday, the MOW Team began the process of removing the undulating concrete over the tracks between I Street and the turntable in Old Sacramento. It was lifting up in places which was causing an impediment to locomotives and cars rolling over it. Jack-hammers, picks, chisels, and shovels were out in force. Our good friend and former MOW compatriot, Fred Perry, once said of the MOW Team, "We are the 'chain-gang' of the Railroad." And, with an EIC who ran the crew like "Captain" from the movie "Cool Man Luke," that's exactly what it looked like. Fortunately for Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Mike H., Anthony, Michael Florentine, Pam Tatro, Frank, and Heather, an extra-large pink box of doughnuts was waiting for them when they arrived (so, they had nothing to complain about). Following doughnuts, the Team deployed quickly. Mike H. hopped on Big Green and Mike F. took out the back-hoe. Over in Old Sac., Pam, Clem, and Mike F. brandished picks and mattocks to dig out the end of the concrete by I Street so that Mike H. could get the forks of Big Green beneath it to lift it out in big blocks. That worked for a bit but between the rails, it became necessary to deploy the jack-hammers. Mike F. and Alan took the first shift blasting the concrete to pieces. As the chucks came up, Joe, Heather, Clem, and Anthony picked them up and loaded them into bucket of the back-hoe. Joe and Anthony next took to the jack-hammers and were like machines, themselves, cracking and breaking great swaths of concrete. Mike H. on Big Green again came in lift out the jacked-out pieces. The "chain-gang" of Heather, Clem, Pam, Alan, and Frank continued their "bucket-brigade" of shifting broken concrete pieces to the loader and dumpster. Giving Anthony a break, Pam took up the jack-hammer and cut away a mighty block of cement. All of this activity was occurring in the same space where the Granite Rock No. 10 gets filled with water before each run of the excursion train. Both the MOW Team and Railroad crew did a great job working together to make sure everything went smoothly and safely. Plus, having the GR10 come by every hour or two made the day even more enjoyable.

After lunch, Pam, Heather, and Alan headed to the Stanford Gallery to represent the MOW Team at the Museum's Volunteer Open House. Pam and Heather did a fantastic job encouraging the prospective docents over to the MOW table where Alan showed off our wares. Back at the job-site, Mike F., Joe, Mike H., and Frank worked tirelessly to remove concrete stuck between the bolts of the frog. After much hand effort, they decided to try holding the jack-hammer horizontally to it chisel-out. It took three of them to hold the hammer in the horizontal position as it cut away wedged-in cement. But, they persevered cleared it all out. By now, the dumpster was filled to capacity with 10-tons of concrete. Had there been more room in it, we could have broken up more. So, next week, two dumpsters will be delivered so that the MOW chain-gang can continue demolition. While the concrete is up, we'll replace ties under the switch and make sure everything is ship-shape and Bristol fashion as the Team continues its never-ending endeavor to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the Team will gather as usual at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop on Tuesday and Thursday. More quality time with the jack-hammers is on offer Saturday with doughnuts starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Come on out and join the fun. It may be hard work at times but, with such a great Team of folks, it's a fun way to achieve great accomplishments. Many thanks to all!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard





Mike T. shows the MOW Team's mighty man-lift to the inspectors



Heather adjusts the brakes on the A-6 motorcar





Joe adjusts the brakes on the other side



Mike F., Clem, and Pam chip away at the dirt near the edge of the concrete as Mike H. "break-dances" on Big Green





Mike H. gets the forks of Big Green under the concrete and lifts it out



Anthony and Mike H. attach the air-hose to the jack-hammer





Joe and Clem pick away at the edges concrete with mattocks tools while Alan guides Mike F.'s efforts on the jack-hammer



Alan shows 'em all how it's done





Mike F. and Anthony tag-team the concrete



Clem and Pam move concrete blocks as part of the MOW Team "chain-gang"





Mike H. lifts-out more concrete with Big Green



Heather and Pam move more concrete into the bucket





More concrete demolition by Big Green



Here comes the train!





Joe and Pam take the next shift on the jack-hammers



There's no doubt that Pam thinks that breaking out concrete with the jack-hammer is fun!





Mike F. on the back-hoe takes a bucket full of rubble to the dumpster



The dumpster filled up faster than expected





Mike H. and Heather in the bucket-brigade



More water for the locomotive as Joe's grandson Ben stopped by to join the fun!





Pam and Alan entice prospective docents to the MOW Team



Mike F., Joe, and Mike H. set up for horizontal jack-hammering





Jack-hammering out concrete stuck between bolts is proving more difficult than initially believed...



Success as Joe scrapes away the last bits





Frank breaks-up the concrete going into the wedge of the switch



Harry Voss stops by to watch Mike F. on the back-hoe even-out the concrete chunks in the dumpster