

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for September 5, 2016. It may be a day late but certainly not a dollar short. And, Don't worry, you'll get your full dose of the MOW Team's exciting adventures from last week. I promise. So, let's get this update going!

Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Anthony Filamor, Alan Hardy, Joe Margucci, Weston Snyder, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, and Frank Werry all got together on Tuesday for an evening of MOW fun. Mike H. worked on the Kalamazoo tug which is now in Shops. The air compressor on it takes forever to pump-up. So, Mike H., Pat, and Gene removed the shroud over the engine compartment and began testing the compressor. After considerable tests, they determined that the compressor is working fine. Once pumped-up, it holds air like a champ. They figured that the problem may be that some of us are too impatient with the 50-year old machine... Then Mike H. located a definite leak in the Kalamazoo's hydraulic system at the swivel valve connection to the hose reel. It took four gallons of fluid just to get the tank back to the low reading. Joe continued his work wiring up the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar and bench seat. Alan painted a couple of signal cabinets then designated one of them for use with the electrical tools. Anthony, Weston, and Frank headed to Old Sacramento and serviced switch 10. Weston got his initiation with the grease bucket but, remarkable as it may seem, he didn't get any grease on himself (so we told him that initiation didn't count – he'd have to do it again). And, there you have it. Tuesday in a nut-shell.

Chris Carlson took a vacation day Thursday and spent it working on a variety of projects at the Shops. Then, in the evening, he had the great pleasure of joining Alan, Heather, Frank, and Mike H. for a meeting of the minds to start planning the MOW Team's 2017 budget. The talk and ideas were flying – as occurs during such a meeting of powerful minds. In the end, as with all good successful meetings, most decisions were deferred to the next meeting. With so many decisions not made, it was time get to work. Joe took on the task of removing the generator in the A-4 motorcar and replacing it with low-speed alternator. This should help save the A-4's battery. Frank and Heather took on several important tasks around the Shops, including fueling our big machines. Mike H. and Ed Kottal worked to correct that pesky hydraulic leak on the Kalamazoo by replacing the swivel fitting on the hydraulic hose reel. Weston did an extraordinary job painting the steel cabinets in the Shops with silvery paint. They're now bright and shiny as the Tin Man after his wash-and-brush-up in the merry ol' Land of Oz! Yep, your MOW Team keeps right on rolling along!

The tradition of starting every Saturday bright pink box filled with doughnuts was enhanced this week with the addition of blueberry muffins courtesy of Chris. Doughnuts with a blueberry muffin chaser proved quite popular with Alan, Clem Meier, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Joe, Michael Florentine, Anthony, and Weston. Switches, switches, switches – with a little derail on the side – were the orders of the day. Issues with several switches have been noted by our trusty track inspectors both in Old Sac. and out on the line. Switches are made up of many components and, with so many heavy trains constantly rattling over them, they require periodic adjustment to keep everything ship-shape and Bristol fashion. We'd start at Switch 13, the ground-throw at Clunie, where the Team got right to work adjusting the wedge brackets in order to narrow the gauge slightly to bring the switch-points snug with the stock-rails. Also, the switch machine seemed a bit loose and moved around some as it was thrown. So, Steve and Anthony pulled spikes, plugged the holes, and re-spiked the machine. That seemed to do the trick. Then Clem, Weston, Joe, and Anthony serviced the switch giving Weston a second shot at the grease-bucket. Still, not a dollop got on him! The long-term solution is to replace the switch-ties on which the machine is mounted which will happen in the off-season. Then Heather, Mike F., and Steve tamped the area with the tamper.

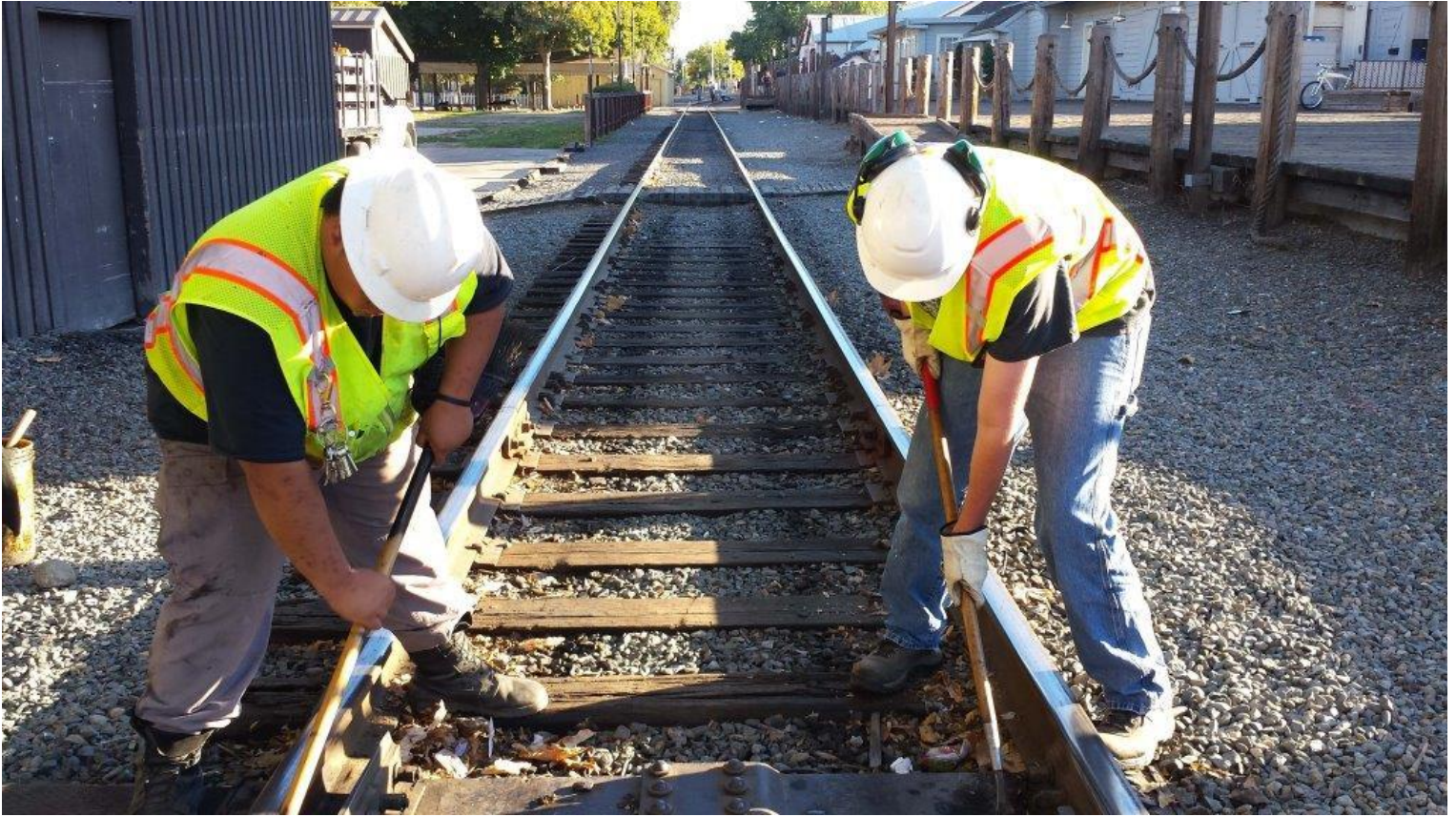
On to Old Sac. where Switches 2, 6, 8, and 10 all needed adjusting. But first, the derail up on the 150 track (which protects the Old Main from any wayward equipment inadvertently rolling down the hill) needed to be secured. It appears that somebody – perhaps more marauding Goths and Vandals – may have tried to swipe it and managed to shimmy-out several spikes. So, Mike F., Clem, Alan, Anthony, and Steve took on the task of re-securing it. They moved it a few feet further south to make sure it was on solid ties where spikes couldn't be shimmied-out. This gave Steve another opportunity to demonstrate his world-famous as-seen-on-TV windmill spike-driving technique. Mike F. then had to try, himself. With the derail re-secured, time to move to Switch 2 at the House Track. Weston, Joe, and Chris took on the problems here and adjusted the connecting-rod to spread the points just enough so that they would be snug against the stock-rails. Then Weston got another opportunity with the grease-bucket and, again, managed to keep himself grease-free. Somethin' ain't right here, folks. Next, the Team moved on to Switch 10 (south Depot) where the transit-clip was contacting the tie immediately to the north of the head-block. The horizontal jacking method was employed to move the tie about four inches north. With that success, the Team moved on to correct the defect at Switch 8, (Business Car Spur). The Team changed the position of the connecting-rod to get the all the components properly in line. Again, Weston took on the grease bucket and again, he won! Amazing! The final switch of the day was Switch 6 (center-siding to platform). This switch would not throw to the siding. But, after Steve, Chris, Joe, Heather, and Weston took it on, Switch 6 was throwing like brand new. It had been quite a day. Everything we set out to do got completed – and the railroad was better-off for it.

This week, the MOW Team will gather as usual today and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, the Team will doughnut-up at 8 o'clock a.m. before heading to Old Sacramento where we will begin dismantling the concrete to the south of the turntable around Switch 1 while dodging the steam-locomotive. So, if you're looking for a little jack-hammer action, Saturday will be your day. There'll be plenty of jack-hammering – and doughnuts – for everyone. Thanks, as always, to a tremendous dedicate crew that works hard building a better railroad!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.





Anthony and Weston clear the flange-ways at Switch 10



Weston's first attempt to get grease all over himself





Frank retrieves a 55-gallon drum of red-diesel



Frank fueling the Green Machine





Paint, paint here, roll, roll there and a couple of tra-la-las. That's how we work the day away in the merry ol' land of MOW...



Joe replacing the A-4 motorcar's generator with an alternator





Joe and Clem loosen the bolts on the wedge-bracket at Switch 13



Clem uses a whacking-tool to whack some sense into wedge-bracket





Chris removes the "keepers" on the bracket at Switch 13



Now Anthony pounds the wedge tight





Joe tightens-down the bracket-bolt

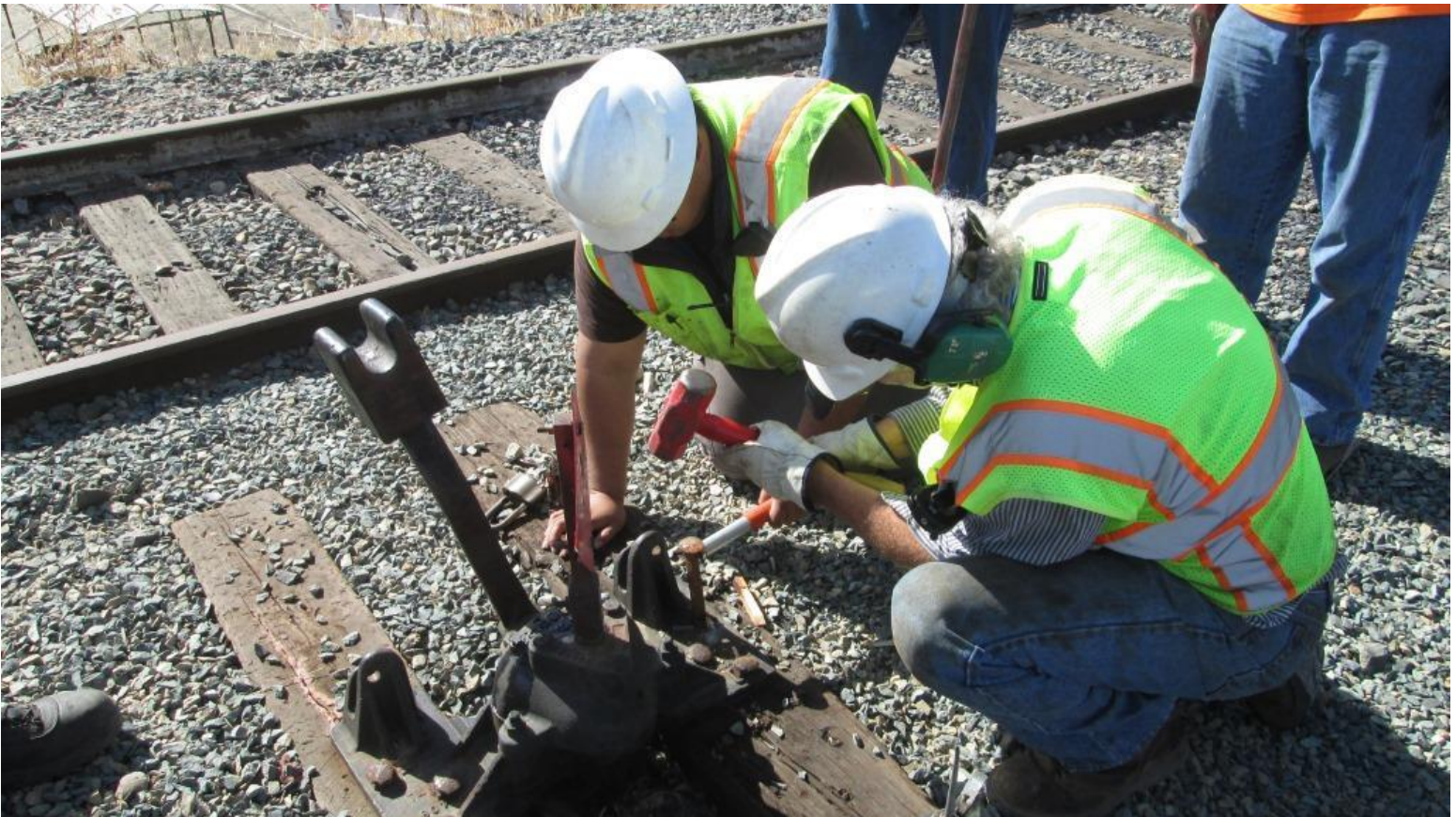


Weston gives the next bracket a piece of his mind



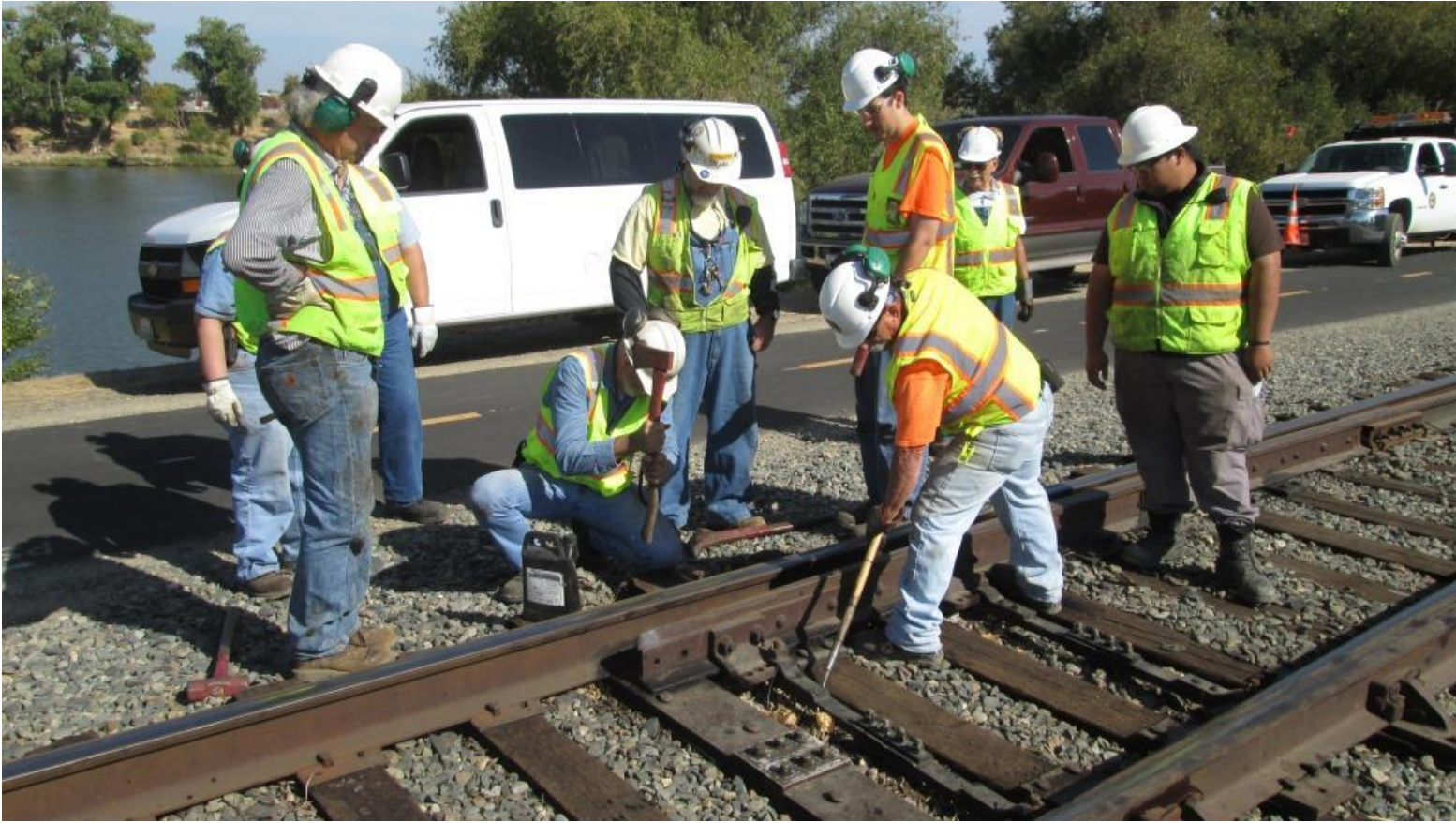


Steve pulls spikes on the switch machine



Anthony uses one of our new magnetic spike-holders as Steve sets a spike at the switch machine on Switch 13





Alan and Joe continue with switch adjustments on the west rail



Steve demonstrates his world-famous as-seen-on-TV windmill spike-driving technique





Now Heather's crew tamps near the switch



Joe and Chris move on to Switch No. 2





Mike F. and Steve move the derail device to a more secure location



Mike F. drove the first couple of spikes





Then, once again, demonstrates the world famous...



...Which inspired Alan to drive a few spikes





Question: how many MOW Team members does it take to watch Joe dig-out a spot next to the tie for a track-jack to be placed?



This time, Joe gets watch as Mike F. digs out the other side of Switch 10





Steve cranks on the jack as Alan give the tie a few whacks to shimmy it over a few inches



Now on to Switch 8 where Steve and Weston remove the connecting-rod bolt to the transit-clip





Mike F. gives the connecting-rod a swift whack with the whacker-tool



Chris, Steve, and Mike F. adjust the position of the connecting-rod on the transit-clip





Chris and Steve replace the bolt holding the connecting-rod in place



The official score: Weston – 5; grease-brush – 0. How he managed not to get any on him is a mystery...





Steve and Chris now take on Switch No. 6



With all adjustments made, Heather now throws Switch 6 with one hand