

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for November 12, 2017. Due to the relative position of the earth's axis to the sun, evening darkness has set in. But, that didn't stop your MOW Team's productivity. So, let's get this update before darkness sets in here.

It was busy, busy, busy in the Erecting Shop on Tuesday. Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Joe Margucci, Eric Baugher, Cliff Hayes, Mike Harris, Anthony Filamor, Art Futer, Dave Wolf, Gene Peck, DJ Mandell, Matt McCracken, Kyle Blackburn, Harry Voss, Chris Carlson, and Heather Kearns brought light to a dark Rail Yards. Last week, you'll recall that the A-6 motorcar suffered a breakdown out on the line. Our field-inspection showed that the output shaft from the transmission had broken. Well, this week, our good friend, Jim Bays from the Restoration Shop took a look at it and determined that the universal joint had broken, not the output shaft. This is something we can repair relatively quickly. Our thanks to Jim for his fantastic help. In the meantime, Eric worked on the A-4 motorcar getting it ready to temporarily replace the A-6. Chris H. and Anthony replaced the fuel filter on the new-used hydraulic power unit. Chris C. and Mike H. steam-cleaned the underside of the Kalamazoo tug. Its turntable needs to be welded in the retracted position to keep it from hanging up on switches. They cleaned-off caked-on oil so the welding can take place. Art painted the Nolan track-cart. DJ, Dave, Alan, and Joe replaced a wonky-wheel on the rail-mounted air-compressor's cart. This was a rather involved project which required removing the wheel-hub to replace a worn-out insulating cone. But, of course, they got it done. Kyle continued welding modifications to the Kalamazoo's engine cover. Indeed, a great job done by everyone!

With the onset of Polar Express means it's time for the mighty Weed Team make its annual pilgrimage down the line to make sure Santa's Village can make the journey south to the North Pole free from vegetative impediments. Mike Taylor, Heather, Dave Megeath, Ed Kottal, and Steve Wilson headed out on the line with the man-lift, chipper, and flatcars. Dave flew overhead in the man-lift's bucket slicing away at tree-limbs that might hit the spires and mansard-roofs of Santa's Village passing below. They then tossed branches Dave felled into the chipper. It was a successful day which culminated in the line being clear of overhead clearance issues for the Village. Without these mighty Weedies, Santa would have no home or the elves no factories in which to slave away at making Christmas merry for all the kids. Many thanks to them all!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Chris H., Anthony, Mike Willis, Eric, Cliff, Mike H., Joe, Kyle Blackburn, Ed, and Frank Werry kept things buzzing. The big project for Cliff and Mike H. was to get the Kalamazoo's turntable welded up into the retracted position. Now, the turntable will stay retracted and not catch on any switches. Joe and Heather got under the A-6 to begin replacing the u-joint. Mike W. removed the busted carburetor on the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar. Chris H., Anthony, Mike W., Ed, and Frank worked on staging for Saturday's continuing operation on the Zoo Line. The Santa Fe locomotives on flatcars that have been plaguing us for the past several months were back on the 560 Interchange Track blocking our access to Old Sacramento. But, the Union Pacific assured us that they would be gone on Friday. So, the Team based its plans on those assurances and loaded the hydraulic power units and tools on a flatcar behind the Kalamazoo. Kyle continued his efforts at modifying the Kalamazoo's engine covers. With everything set, the Team planned on a quick departure Saturday.

The dictionary defines "nemesis" as, "Something that a person cannot conquer." Well, those Santa Fe engines on flatcars have proved the MOW Team's nemesis all summer long. Again, they afflicted us on Saturday as, through the morning mist, they appeared having not been picked up by the Union Pacific as promised. We were completely blocked in and unable to move our necessary equipment over to Old Sacramento. So, Alan, Joe, Heather, Chris H., Clem Meier, Bill Hastings, Pam Tatro, Scott Dunn, Kyle, Steve Nemeth, Art, Frank, Chris C., Mike T., and Anthony re-jiggered the plan to work around them. Fortunately, Chris C. had supplied ample doughnuts to give the Team ample thinking power. Alan, Joe, and Heather unloaded the flatcar and transferred the hydraulic units and tools to trucks. The Team would use the tie-shear spotted on the 150-Track in Old Sac. to pull our train. But, that meant moving three other machines to get to it – all of which steals time. Once moving, the tie-shear suffered a major mechanical malfunction which left it stranded over a switch. With nothing powerful enough to move it out of the way, Steve N. dashed back to the Shops and retrieved Green Machine 2 (GM2). With his skillful touch, Steve shoved the shear back up the hill. But, again, this stole time. By the time the Team got everything together and left Old Sac., it was 11 o'clock. The prime hours of the morning had been lost – all thanks to those Santa Fes. There would have been no need to retrieve any equipment off the 150-Track, which caused such trouble, had the Santa Fes been removed, as promised, on Friday. Although underpowered for this purpose, the scarifier was used to pull our work-train. Once on the Zoo Line, this Team kicked into overdrive and went spike-raving mad. They set spike and drove them with the hydraulic spike-drivers. The Jackson 125 tie-exchanger was used to nip-up the rail so that tie-plates could be inserted between the ties and base of the rails. Everyone got a "piece of the action" setting and driving spikes. Three more ties (under joints) were replaced. Everyone was impressed with the breakneck speed at which they were working to make-up time lost due to the track blockage. Had we been able to get to Zoo Line when planned, the Team could have finished spiking the remaining ties. But, because we had to undo all the extra set-up we did in the morning, the Team had to depart the Zoo Line and follow the 3:30 Veterans' Day Train back to Old Sacramento. Once back in Old Sac., the Team worked into the evening stowing equipment and unloading all that had been loaded in the morning. Several Team members, including Joe, Heather, and Alan, put in a 12-hour day. No one left with less than 10-hours on the clock. Although very frustrating at times, it had been a productive day, nonetheless. We will finish spiking next week and move on to the next phase of the operation – changing ties on the 1-5 bridge. The Team deserves great credit for being able to work in out-of-normal conditions and adjusting on the fly. They are an amazing bunch.

This week, the Team will gather in the Shops on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock. The Weed Team will convene on at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday. More fun is in store on Saturday for the MOW Team starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks again to everyone!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard



Chris H. replaces the fuel filter on the new-used hydraulic power unit



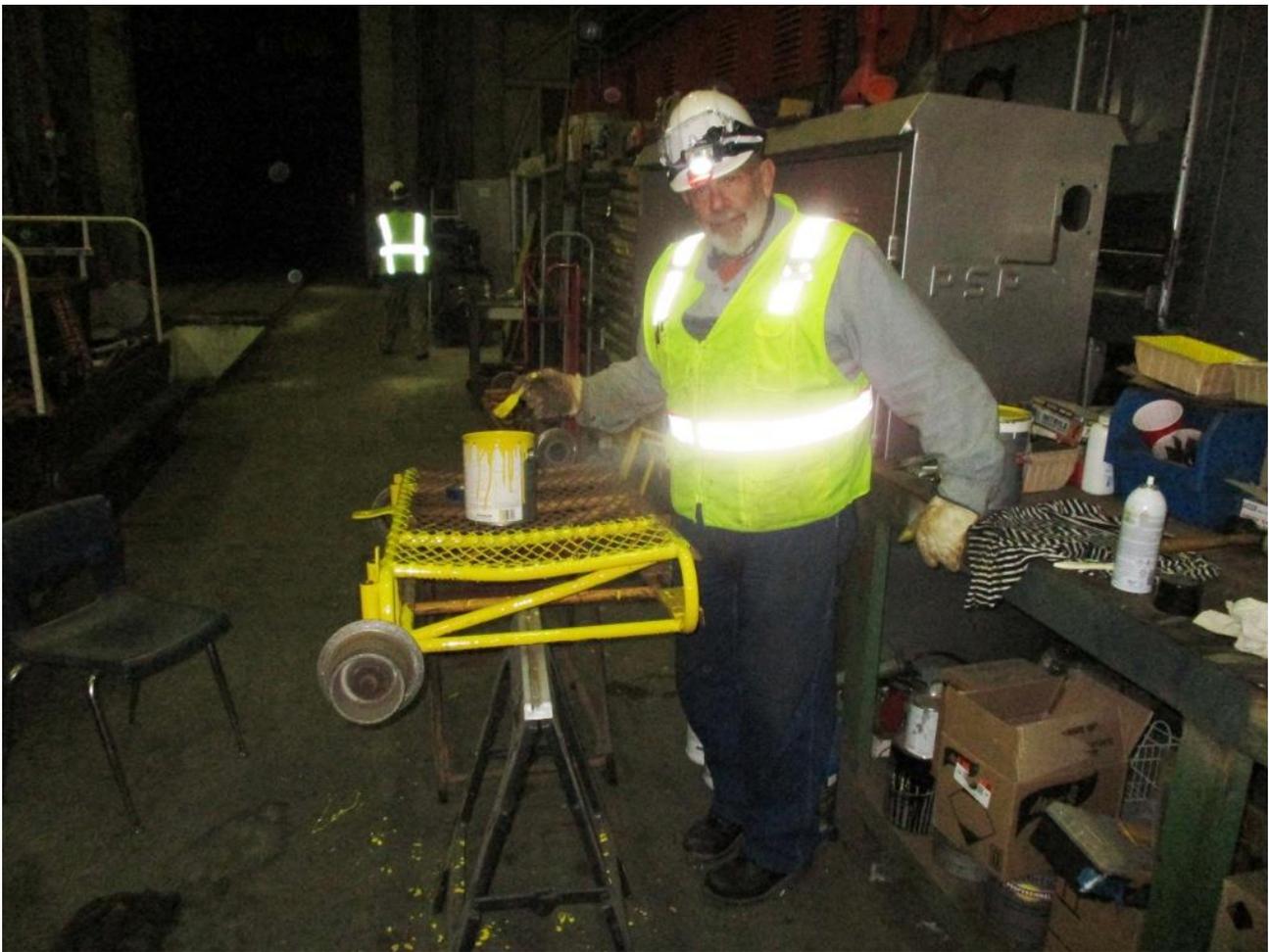
What? Two Joes? Joe M. finds "Signal Joe" Galipeau lurking about the MOW Shop



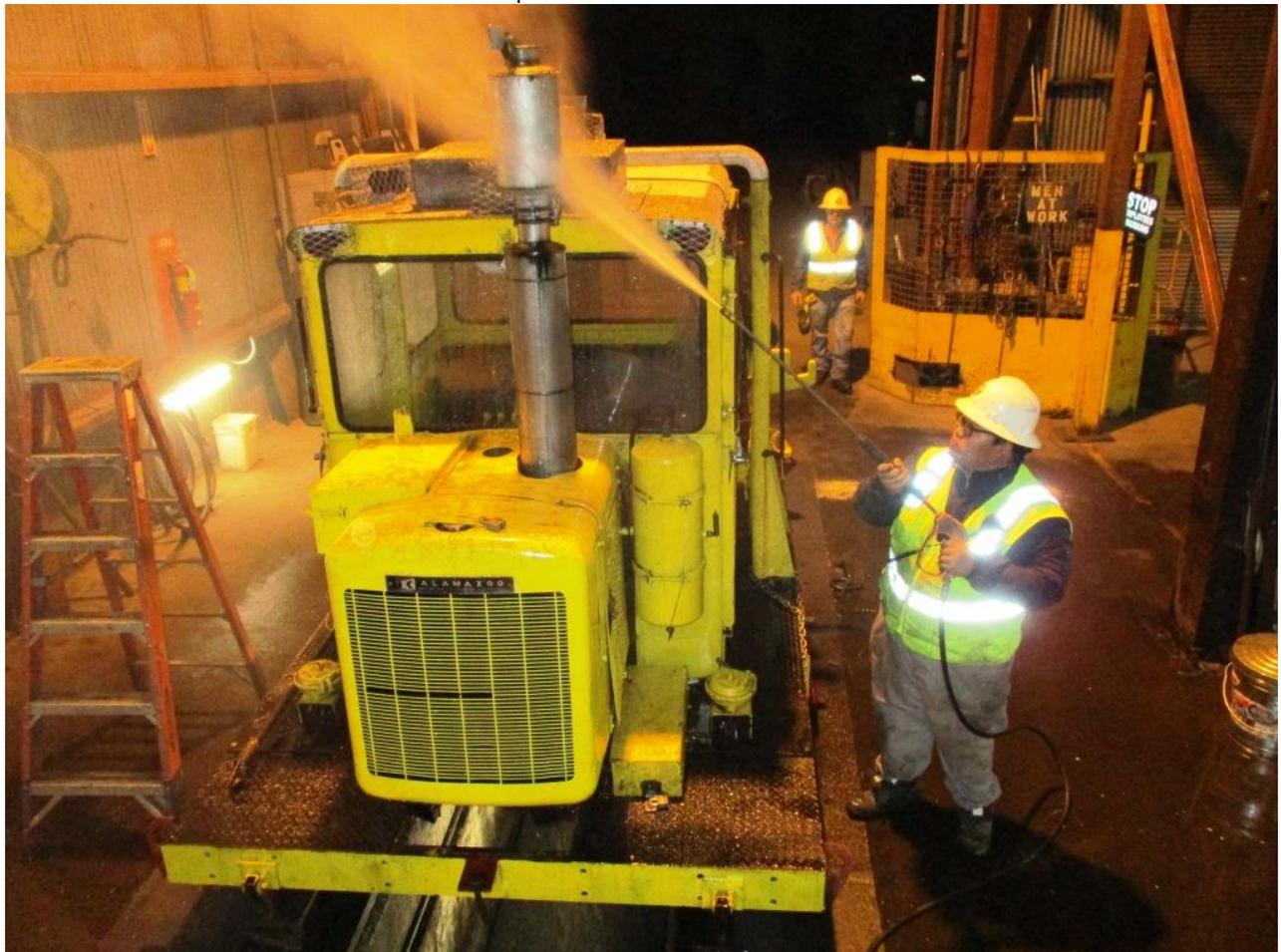
Eric works at getting the A-4 motorcar ready to deploy



Mike H. steam-cleans the underside of the Kalamazoo so that the turntable can be welded-up



Art paints the Nolan Track Cart



After Mike H. cleaned off the turntable, Anthony steam-cleans the rest of the Kalamazoo



Alan and DJ replace the wonky wheel on the air-compressor's track-cart



DJ, Dave W., and Joe combine forces to tighten-down the castellated nut on the air-compressor cart's wheel hub



Alan, Dave W., and Joe bolt-down the replacement wheel on the air-compressor's track-cart



At Miller Park, it's clear that the Weed Team has been through



Steve W., Ed, and Dave M. pulverize tree-debris with the chipper



Mike T. reduces pruned branches to bite-sized bits to toss through the chipper



Nemesis



Mike W. with the Interpretive Handcar Program motorcar's carburetor



Cliff welds-up the Kalamazoo's turntable



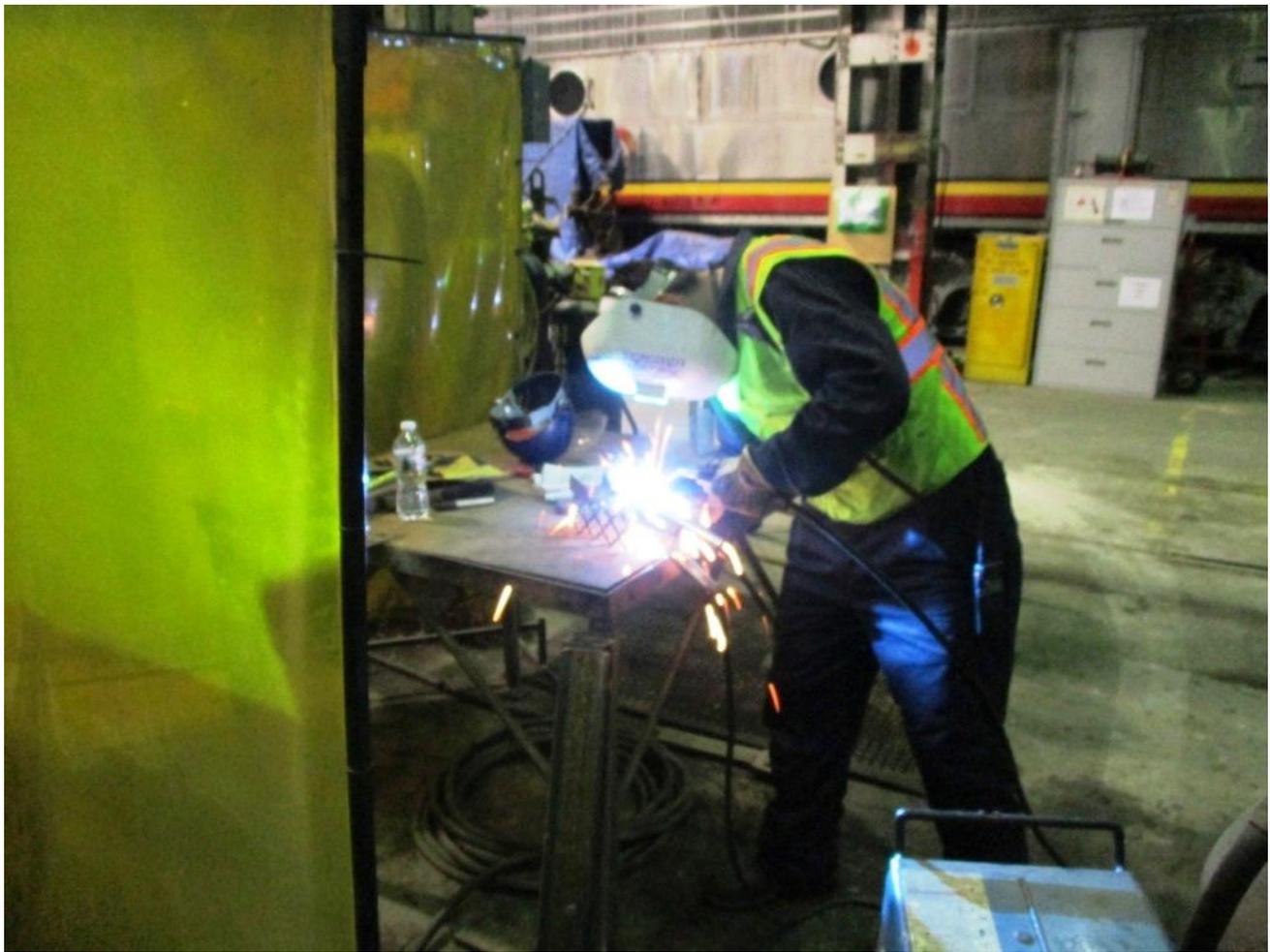
Mike W. guides Ed on the forklift as the hydraulic power unit is loaded onto a pallet



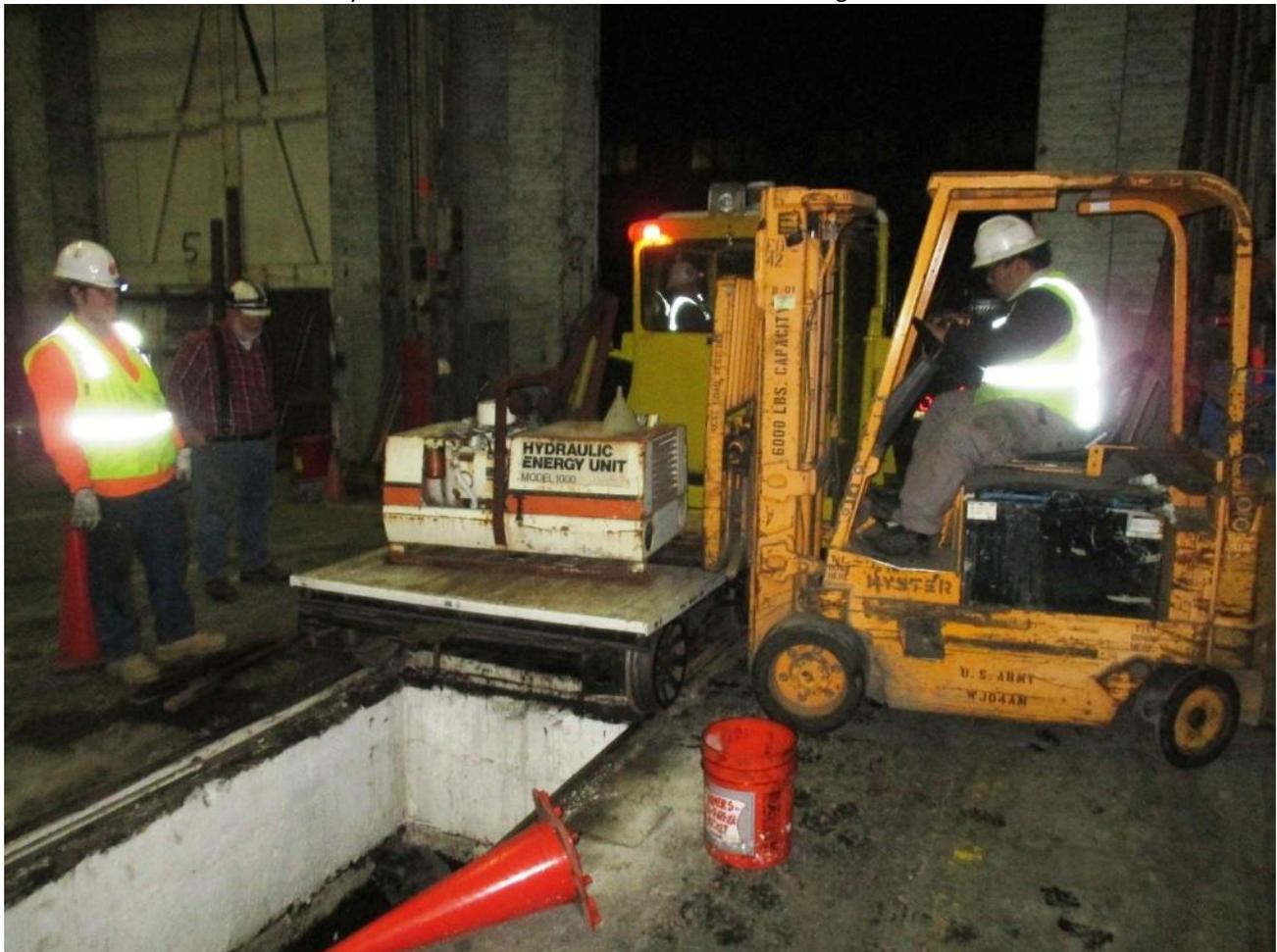
Joe and Heather begin the process of replacing the u-joint under the A-6 motorcar



Chris H., Ed, and Mike W. fill buckets with spikes for use on the Zoo Line



Kyle welds modifications to the Kalamazoo's engine cover



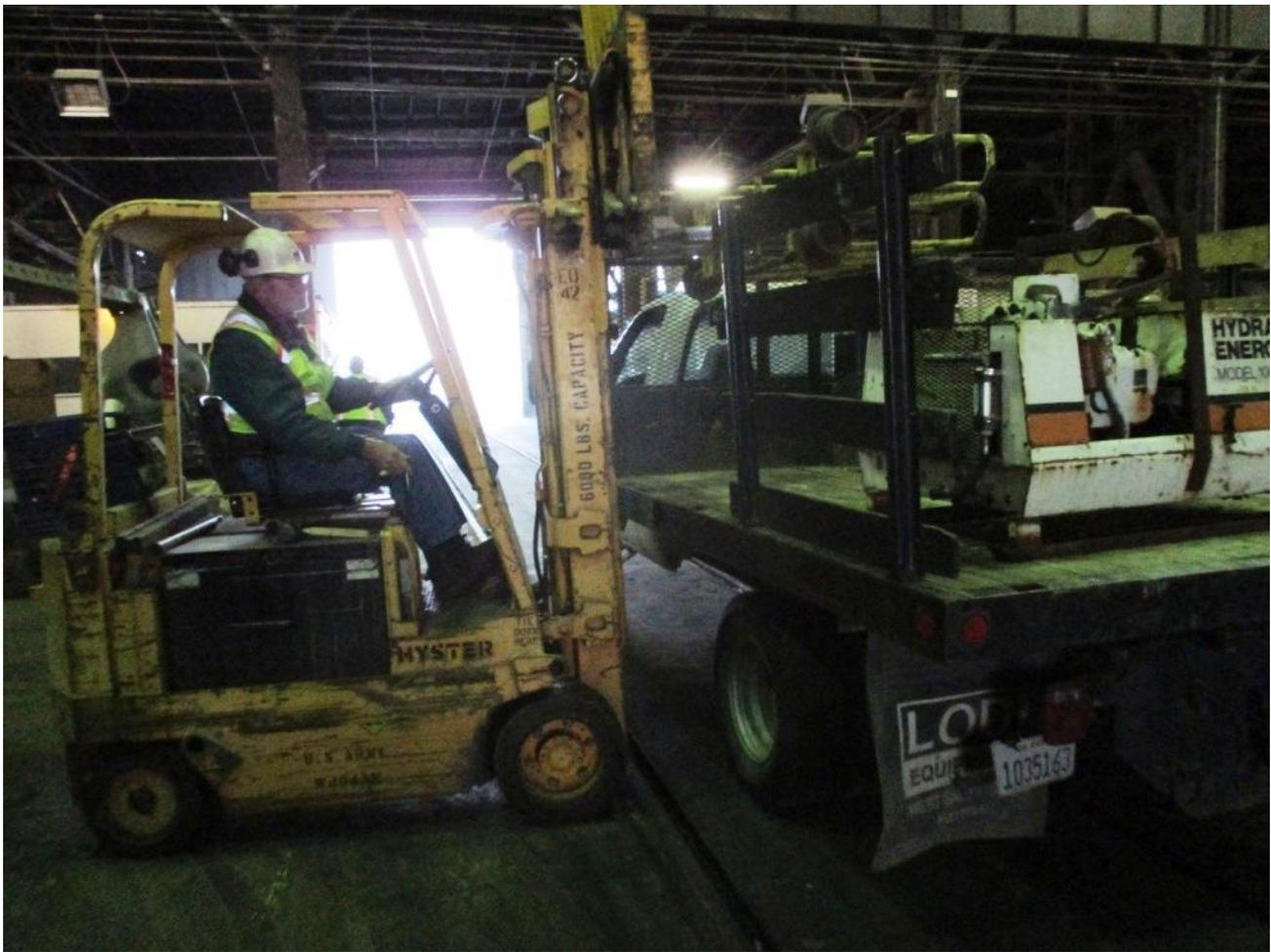
Anthony on the forklift loads the new-used hydraulic power unit on the flatcar guided by Chris H. and Frank



Anthony loads the new hydraulic power unit onto the flatcar behind the Kalamazoo



Like monsters emerging from the mist, the Santa Fes are still blocking our access to the track despite promises to the contrary



After re-jiggering the day's work-plan, Alan loads the Nolan Track Carts and used hydraulic power unit onto a truck



With nothing available to pull the work-train consist out of the container, Clem, Steve N., and Kyle resorted to hand-power



The MOW Team's Great Yellow Fleet: the Jackson 125, tie-crane, scarifier must be moved to access the tie-shear



Using the propane forklift, Frank loads the hydraulic power unit onto one of the Weed Team's flatcars



Dead on the line: Steve N. on GM2 pulls the broken-down tie-shear back up the hill



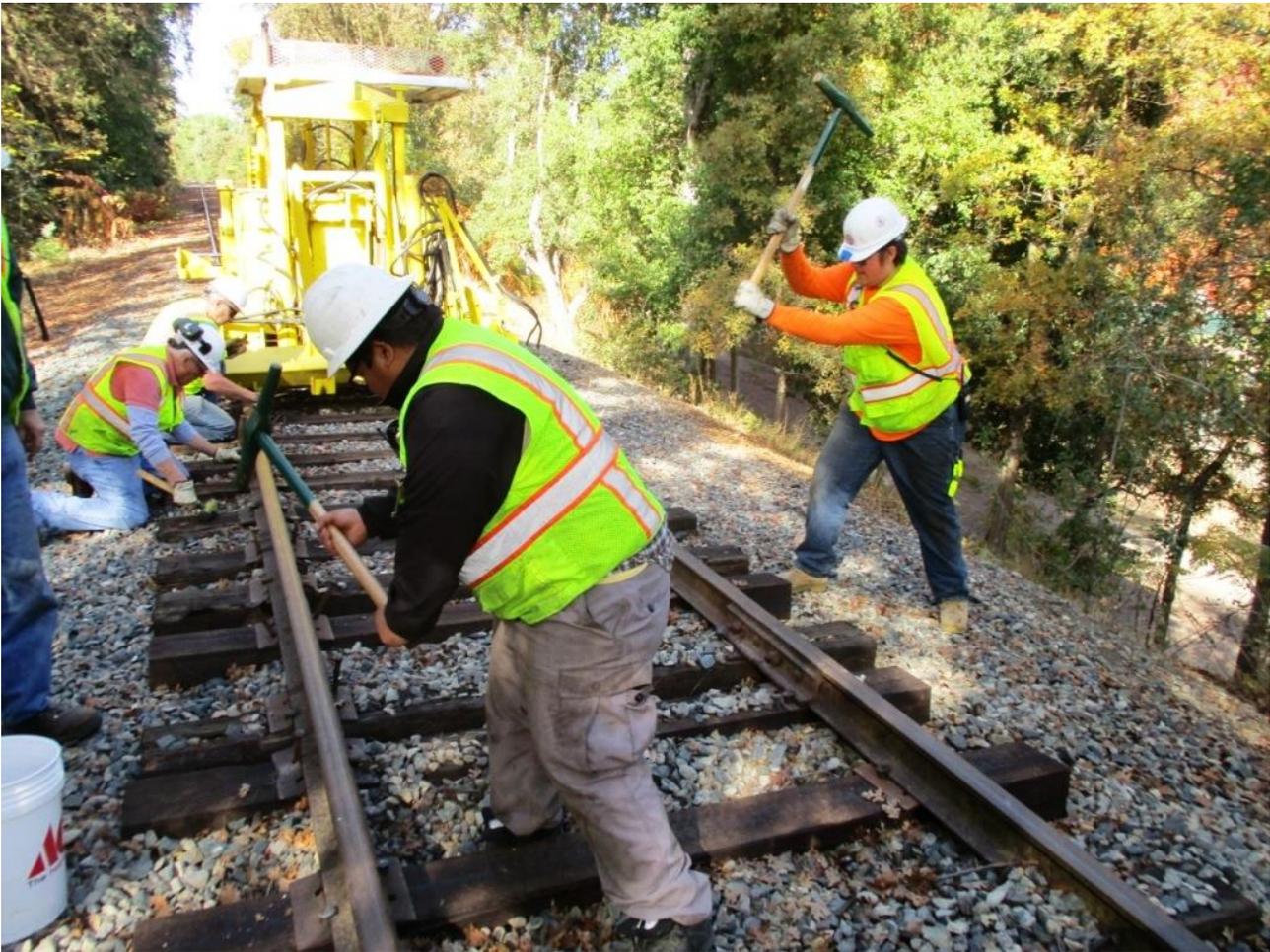
Finally, the Team arrives on site just ahead of the Veterans' Day train



Immediately, Bill starts setting spikes



As does Pam



Weston has been a terrible influence on Anthony and Chris H. who follow his example and forgo hydraulic power in favor of hand spike-driving!



Steve N. nips-up the tie as Chris H. drives a spike by hand



Heather concurs. Enough of this driving spikes by hand, already!



Steve N. demonstrates the proper way to drive spikes – with hydraulic power



Joe and Heather set spikes as Kyle nips-up the tie



Scott sets spikes



A tie under a joint needed replacing, so Joe lined up a new tie for insertion as the Jackson 125 pulls it under the rails



Art and Scott pull the Nolan Track Cart along behind the spiking action



Chris and Heather work on getting the used hydraulic power unit started again after it quit



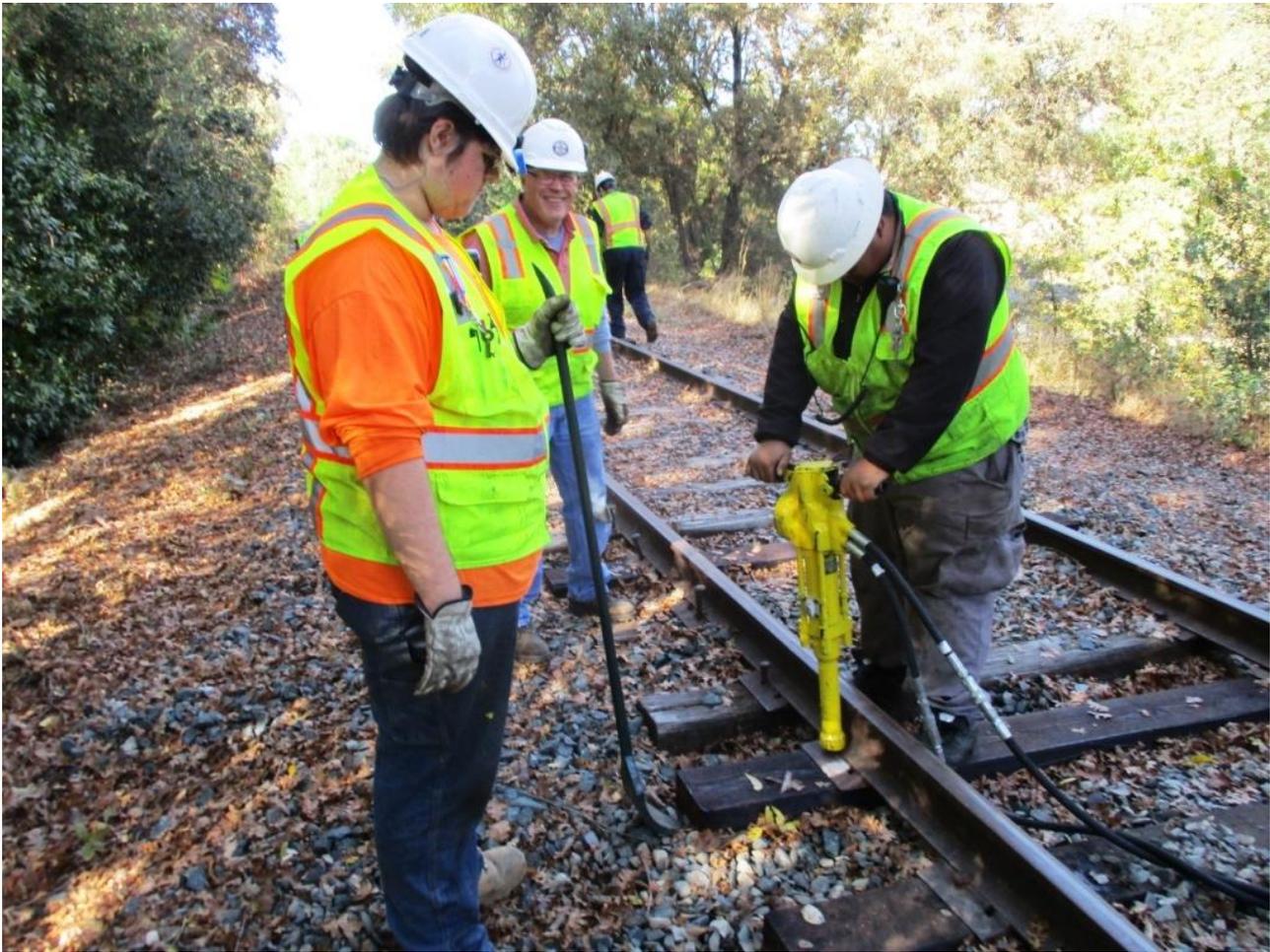
Chris H. finally learns that hydraulically-powered spike-driving is much easier than doing by hand



Kyle drives spikes with the hydraulic spike-driver



Joe uses the rail-jacks on the Jackson 125 to lift the rail so that Heather can insert a tie-plate under the joint



Anthony now takes Chris H.'s word for it and tries driving spikes with hydraulic power



Scott couldn't resist the hydraulic spike-driving fun as Art guides the hoses



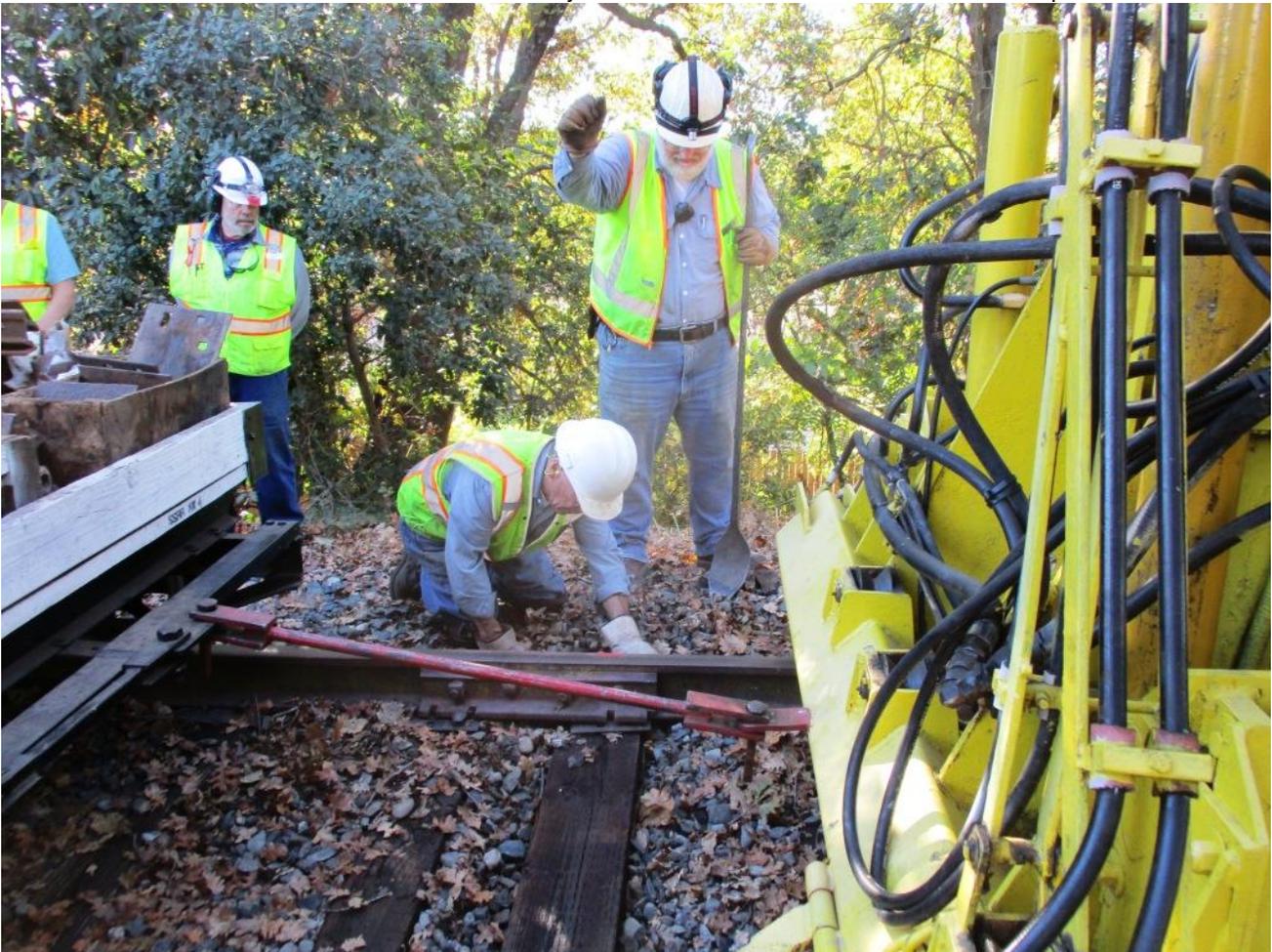
Mike T., Heather, and Joe grab another tie to insert under a joint



Chris C. uses the Jackson 125 to draw the new tie under the rail



Then Chris uses the Jackson 125's rail-jacks to lift the rail so that Joe can insert a tie-plate



Now Mike T. places a joint-plate under a joint as Frank guides the lift by Chris C. in the 125



Back in Old Sacramento, Bill and Kyle attach the long draw-bar between the scarifier and work-train to shove it back into the container



Since GM2 was still in Old Sac., Steve uses it to unload the hydraulic power units from the flatcar