

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way team update for November 13, 2016. Election night brought your MOW Team out to vote for the prospect of putting in some good work out at the Rail Yards. So, without waiting for any votes to be counted, let's get this update sworn into office!

Your intrepid reporter was forced to be out of town on Tuesday for paid-employment related purposes. So, Matt McCracken provides us with an excellent play-by-play report from on the scene. Joining Matt M. were Pat Scholzen, Anthony Filamor, Cliff Hayes, Joe Margucci, Alan Hardy, Weston Snyder, Harry Voss, Frank Werry, and Chris Carlson. Last week's rains resulted in flooding of the Bay 4 inspection-pit 4 in the Erecting Shop. So, Anthony arrived early to get a sump-pump in the pit to get that pit pump pumping. Last week the Team brought the A-6 motorcar, which was suffering from a bad Bendix in its starter motor, over to the Shops for repairs. Unfortunately, the only way to get to said Bendix is going down into the pit under the Motorcar. Joe and Weston were up for the task. Meanwhile, another signal cabinet from outside the Erecting Shop needed to be moved over into the Boiler Shop for our good friends in the Signal Department. Matt M. and Anthony took on the task. With Matt M. on the Hyster Forklift and Anthony on the Big Green Machine, Alan and Harry directed the move from the ground. The nine-foot eight-inch wide cabinet was moved from one building to the other with the grace one might expect from an elephant doing ballet. You might even think they had done it before! (They have.) Back in the Erecting Shop, Joe and Weston had finished installing the new Bendix on the Motorcar. Everyone watched with bated breath as Weston turned the key, and... nothing. The thought was thunk that maybe the battery was dead but, even with the jump-box hooked up was a no-go. Chris suggested "borrowing" the battery from the A5 Motorcar, and voilà! The deep thrum of eight-powerful cylinders reverberated through the shop once more. The team called it a productive night and, after chatting over some leftover cake, headed for home.

Thursday, Heather Kearns, Anthony, Joe, Matt M., Harry, Frank, Mike Harris, Alan, and Chris elected to show-up again. It was machine moving night in the Erecting Shop. The tie-shear needed to be moved to the dry bay so that Cliff could work on repairing the tie-end "kicker". So, it had to trade places with the ballast regulator. Anthony got the transfer table all lined up. Chris piloted the shear and traded places with the regulator. Then, the Team moved the A-6 over to Old Sacramento. Conductor Heather opened negotiations with the UP dispatcher in Omaha. After a moment, the signal glowed green and Matt M. on the A-6 proceeded over the flange-bearing diamonds and into the Old Sac. Yard. With the motorcar put to bed, the Team headed back to the Erecting Shop where Joe was working diligently on rewiring the Interpretive Handcar Program's bench-car. The evening concluded with a discussion about the Team's responsibilities for the upcoming hot-chocolate festival. It was decided to dedicate Saturday to fulfilling those responsibilities. With that, "quittin' time USA" was announced and the Team headed out into the night.

Alan, Joe, Anthony, Matt M., Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Michael Florentine, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Harry, Matt Blackburn, Chris, Mike Miller, Weston, Ed Drury, John Rexroth, and Taka Blackburn all showed up on Saturday for some MOW fun. It was fantastic to have so many folks out on the line. In fact, there were more Team members than doughnuts! A bit of a crisis? Yes. But, the spirit of camaraderie shone through as some sacrificed for the good of the many. Prep for Polar was the plan of the day. The Team would split in two groups: Team Old Town and Team Trees. Team Old Town would re-activate the dual-gauge switch on the Display Track in front of the Silver Palace. Team Trees would head down the line to take care of clearance issues that might impact the migration of the 21-foot tall Santa's Village to Baths. Heather, as acting Weedie-in-Chief, headed up Team Trees with Joe, Matt M., Mike F., Mike M., Ed, and John. They quickly loaded the truck with the tools they needed and headed out of town with Mike F. in the cab of the man-lift and Matt M. behind the throttle of the A-6 pulling the chipper. In several areas, trees needed to be pruned back to avoid contact with the Village. Joe climbed in the bucket of the man-lift and, with gas-powered-chainsaw-on-a-stick, flew overhead like a purple-martin in springtime. Ed, Mike M., Heather, and Matt M. used other implements to cut away at protruding plant material closer to the ground. As Joe severed limbs overhead, the debris was chopped to tiny bits by the chipper. By day's end, Team Trees had attacked offending greenery from the Pioneer Bridge to Baths. Santa's Village and the Polar Express are now safe to proceed south to the North Pole!

Alan, Anthony, Pam, Clem, Steve, Harry, Chris, Weston, Matt B., and Taka were Team Old Town. First up, the dual-gauge switch on the Display Track. The plan is to spot the Santa Fe Super Chief locomotive 347C on the Display Track in front of the Central Pacific Passenger Station throughout the Polar extravaganza. But, the switch has not been operated since the Union Pacific 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2012. Steve brought in Big Green and removed the crates placed on top of the switch to prevent tripping hazards. Chris, Weston, Anthony, and Matt B. removed the grates covering the switch. The switch would not throw. So, to make a long story short, Pam, Anthony, Chris, Weston, and Matt B. removed debris and scraped dried muck off switch plates. Steve and Weston greased the moving components and Matt B. oiled the machine. That did the trick. The switch could now be thrown. In the meantime, Clem dug-out the flangeways of the Display Track. Anthony and Pam helped clean up the remains. Replacing the grates proved difficult as they were bent and the posts holding them up had rotted away. Harry, Chris, Steve, and Taka built temporary vertical supports, each of which were a different size. So, this took more time than anticipated. But, they persevered and the grating is now stable. Next, Team Old Town loaded two flatcars full of old dead ties that were removed from the Switch 1 project. Despite being rotten, they were still nasty-heavy. Steve on Big Green scooped them up and Chris, Clem, Weston, Pam, and Anthony guided them onto the flatcars. Matt B. then piloted the A-4 motorcar which pulled the dead-tie laden flatcars down to Setzer where they would be added to the ever growing Mount Dead Tie. Soon, both Teams converged back in Old Sacramento to pack up and put away their machines and tools. The Teams accomplished their Polar goals and were pleased with the results. Darkness had descended by the time everyone got back to the Shops. So, after the obligatory chat-time, they shut off the light, locked the doors, and headed home quite pleased with the day's achievements.

This coming week, the MOW Team adventure continues Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, sufficient doughnuts will be on hand by 8 o'clock a.m. As always, thank you very much to the talented and dedicated Team of folks who volunteer their time, labor, and skills in building a better railroad. And, a special shout-out and thank you to Matt M. for his excellent report on Tuesday's activities.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike F. pilots the man-lift while Joe flies about through the boughs



Matt M. and Joe attack both flanks of the tree



♪ And when the bough breaks... ♪



Further down the line, Mike F. and Joe take on another intruder



In Old Sac., Anthony and Chris get a crate onto the forks of Big Green for Steve to haul away



Clem digs the dirt out of the flange-ways on the dual-gauge Display Track



Chris uses the air-wand to blow debris out of the dual-gauge switch



Chris, Weston, Anthony, and Matt B. remove a grate from over the dual-gauge switch



Matt B. attempts to throw the switch for the first time in four years



Weston is given "pointers" on how to do his job from a team of experts...



Steve sweeps the dirt and debris off the switch-plates to which Weston applies grease



Chris and Matt B. oil the switch machine



Pam cleans-off the area supporting the grate over the switch-rod



Clem blows away the rubbish he dug out of the flange-ways



Matt B., Anthony, and Weston temporarily replace the unsupported grates over the switch



Pam, Steve, and Matt B. put safety cones around the switch to alert folks to the potential trip hazard



Steve collects dead switch ties with the Big Green Machine



Clem and Chris help guide the dead-ties onto the flatcar



At Setzer, Alan supervises Weston and Anthony as they make "Mount Dead Tie" grow...



Steve, Chris, and Taka build a new support system to hold the grates in place



MOW's father and son Team, Taka and Matt B., work together building supports for the grates



Taka and Matt B. measure twice and cut once



Team Trees keeps right on trimming



Then chop the debris into bits