

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for June 4, 2017. The adventures of the MOW Team continued this week with all kinds of building-a-better-railroad activity. So, let's keep the adventure going by getting this update started right now!

The Erecting Shop sprung to life as Heather Kearns, Kyle Blackburn, Joe Margucci, Mike Harris, Alan Hardy, Frank Werry, Weston Snyder, Gene Peck, and Pat Scholzen showed up on Tuesday. As you may recall, we've had some difficulties with the rails on the turntable shifting. Because the deck of the turntable is higher than the surrounding tracks, locomotives and rolling-stock hit the rail-ends when climbing onto the table. Over time, this has caused them to shift northwards. So, Tuesday evening, Heather, Joe, and Kyle trekked to Old Sacramento where, through brute force, the east rail was returned to its proper position. We have a long-term solution in mind but, the rail on the turntable is an odd size – 85-pound rail – which was prevalent with the Western Pacific Railroad but, not found anywhere else on our line. It will require the acquisition of some specialty accoutrements. While in Old Sac., the Team replaced a broken bolt in a rail joint which had been reported by our trusty track inspectors. In the Shops, Mike H. has been working on restoring the original Big Green Machine to action. Now that the machine starts, Mike H. climbed aboard and moved it to the Erecting Shop for further work. Alan and Weston continued grinding the points of the wing rails for the frog at Switch 19 in order to get them to fit properly in the frog structure. Joined by Mike H., they then attempted to bolt them in place. The fit is better but, still not quite right. More grinding is necessary. But, by this point, it was time to bring the evening's activities to a grinding halt.

Thursday, Weed Team Captain Mike Taylor, along with Weedies Ed Kottal and Dave Megeath, deployed their weed-spray equipment to take on the nasty green things that keep popping up within our right-of-way. This winter's heavy rains have emboldened the green menace unlike any time in the recent past. So, Mike T. mixed-up a new and improved formula of blue-brew that should have the power to overcome the rain-strengthened weeds. They sprayed the enhanced blend along the 560 Track, all around the Shops, by the Rail Yards turntable, and MOW materials yard. Next, they moved to Old Sac. where the pesky plants received a thorough dosing of new blue-brew. The new brew should start to show results relatively soon. Indeed, it was an outstanding job by a dedicated crew. Many thanks to the mighty Weed Team!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Ed, Alan, Joe, Weston, Matt McCracken, Heather, and Frank kept up the pace. Since parts seem unavailable for the pull-start of the gauger's old Wisconsin engine, Ed managed to scrounge up other bits and pieces from around the Shops to make the thing workable. His improvisation seems to have worked. The ingenuity of the MOW Team never ceases to amaze. Joe kept busy by continuing with the re-wiring effort on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. Weston and Matt installed new light fixtures in the electric-tool cabinet. Frank ran over to Old Sac. to top-off the Kalamazoo tug's radiator with a little coolant. Then, he took some measurements on the turntable for our proposed fix. That pretty much sums up the evening's events. So, "quittin' time, USA" was sounded and the Team headed off into the night.

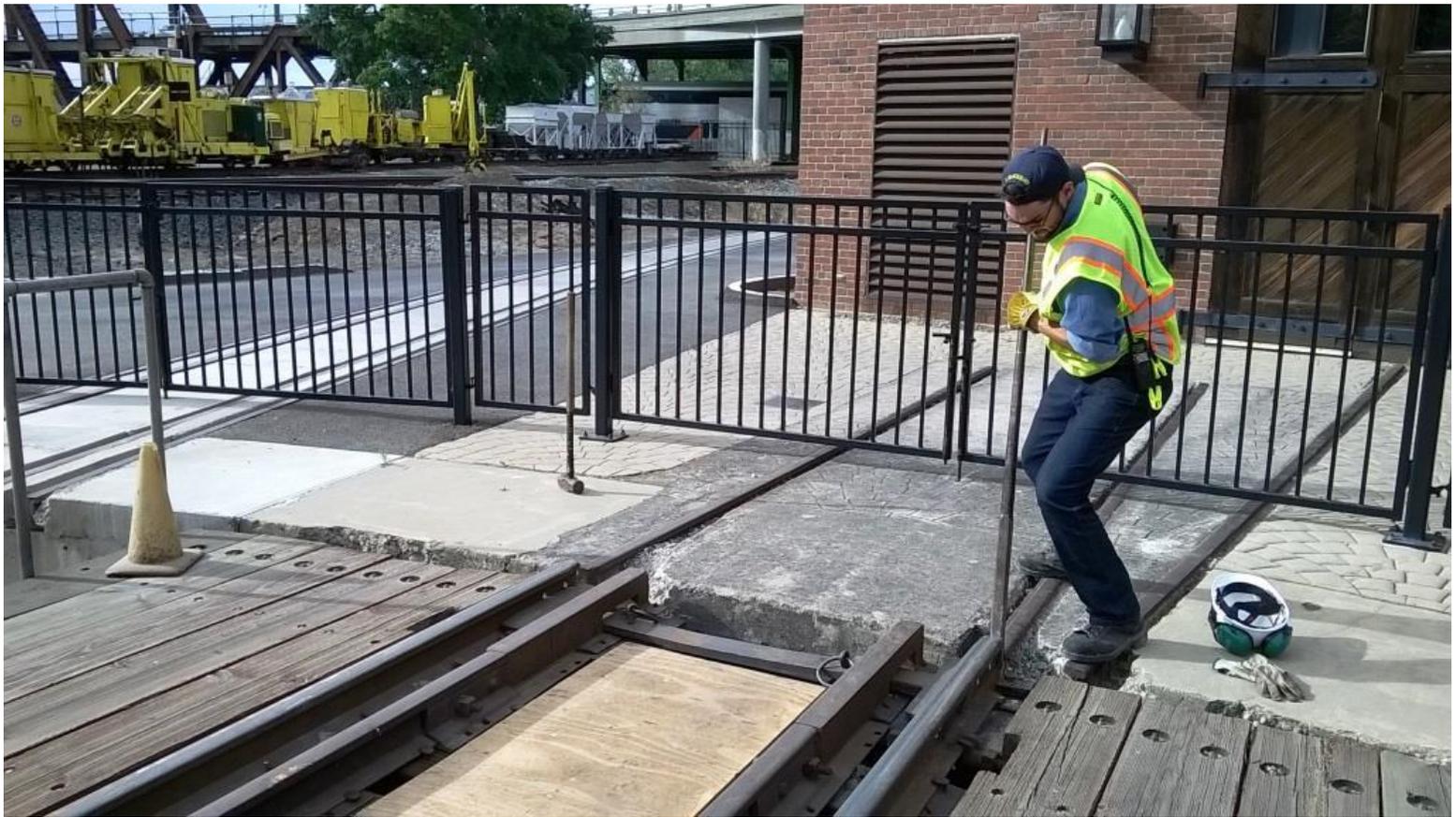
Saturday, Joe, Alan, Clem Meier, Harry Voss, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Matt, Frank, Chris Machado, and Pam Tatro welcomed back Michael Florentine, who just returned from a sojourn in Italy, with the offer of a fresh doughnut – which he eagerly accepted. Of all things Mike F. missed while in Italy was his weekly MOW doughnut ration. Once the celebratory doughnuts were consumed, the Team headed back down the Sutterville Line to the Zoo. The day's plan was to finish plating ties and spike the east rail from Sutterville Road to the I-5 Bridge. The west-rail will be spiked after we get the gauger out there to re-gauge a few narrow areas. But first, the motorcar and rail-lifter needed to be taken over the UP Main from the Shops. Conductor Heather made the necessary arrangements with UP Dispatcher 62 in Omaha and motorcar engineer Matt roared across the UP Main to Old Sac. Alan fired up the Kalamazoo, Frank handled the tamper, and Harry piloted the MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck. At the job-site, Joe, Pam, Clem, Steve, Harry, and Mike F. started at Sutterville Road and worked north setting spikes. Frank tamped the new ties from the I-5 Bridge south. Chris, Heather, and Matt deployed the rail-lifter for the insertion of tie-plates. As spikes were set, Alan in the Kalamazoo skillfully shoved the air-compressor north as Mike F. and Steve took turns driving spikes deep into the new ties with the pneumatic spike-driver. The Team worked methodically as this process continued up the line like a well-oiled machine. A few hundred yards north, Heather, Matt, and Chris were installing tie-plates using the rail-lifter to grab the rails, lift them just enough for plates to slide under the base of the rails, and releasing them for a tight fit. Chris operated the lifter and Matt moved it into position over each new tie with the motorcar. By lunch time, plating was nearly complete and spiking had moved halfway up the line from Sutterville Road.

Following lunch, the progress continued as Alan, Frank, Matt, and Joe took on the spiking effort while Steve, Mike F., and Heather finished up with the plating of the new ties at the joints. Since there are two different types of joint bars on the Sutterville line requiring different plates, several joints were skipped by the morning plating crew until the appropriate plates could be sorted. Throughout the afternoon, the spiking team made good headway up the hill until about 150 ties were spiked along the east rail. By this time, the "witching-hour" for getting equipment back to town in between trains had arrived. So, we packed up and headed back to Old Sac. The Team is making tremendous progress on the Sutterville track. Next week, we'll re-gauge the track and spike the west rail. That will complete phase-one of the project. Phase-two is replacement of an additional 120 ties. Indeed, every day one day closer to trains running to the Zoo.

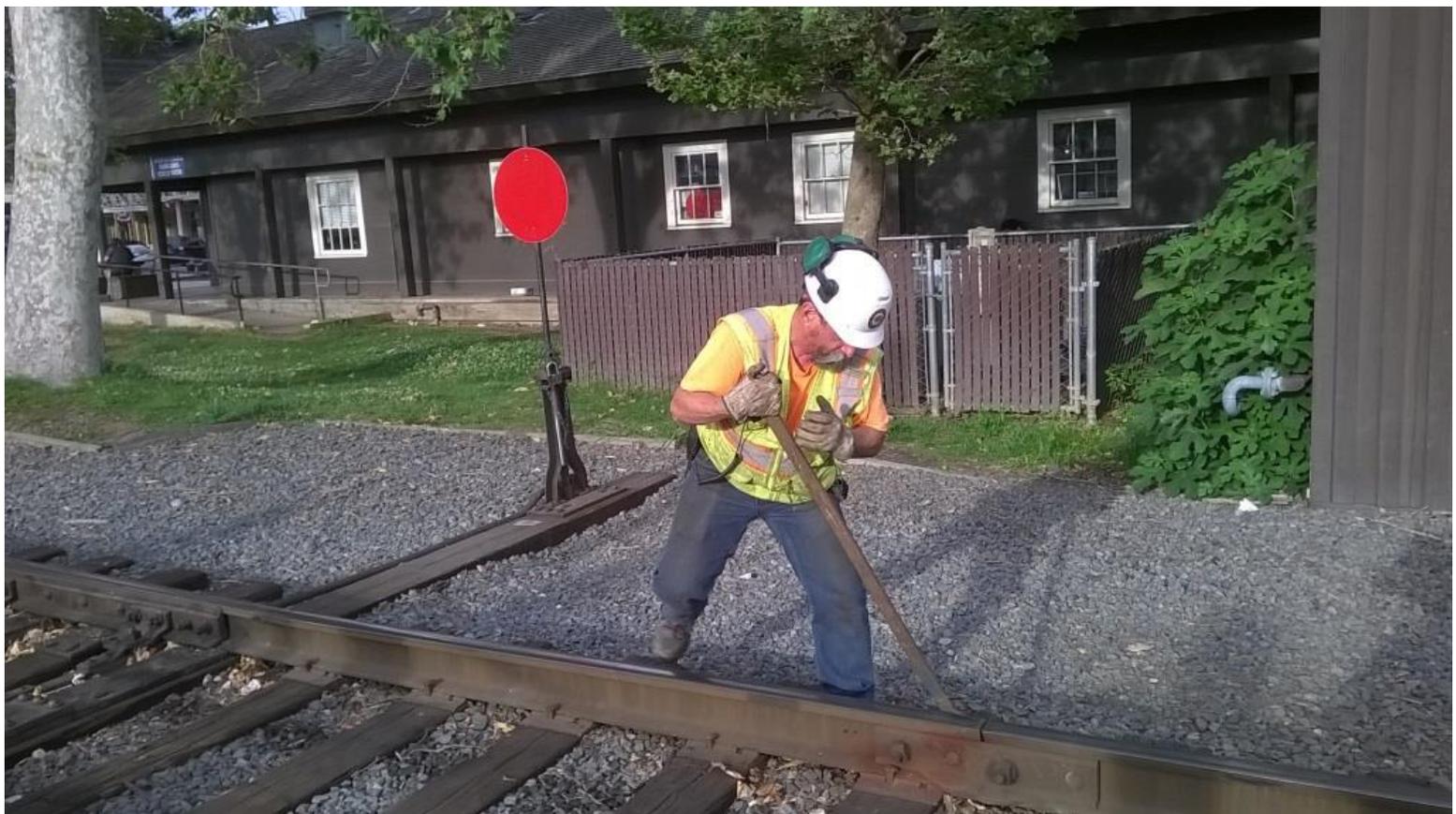
This coming week, the MOW saga will continue on Tuesday and Thursday beginning at or before 5 o'clock p.m. in the Erecting Shop. Saturday's adventure begins with doughnuts at 8 o'clock a.m. also in the Erecting Shop. As always, many sincere thanks and appreciation to all the fine folks of the MOW Team who undertake the hard-labor of maintaining – and in this case – expanding the infrastructure of the Sacramento Southern Railroad.

See you out on the line,

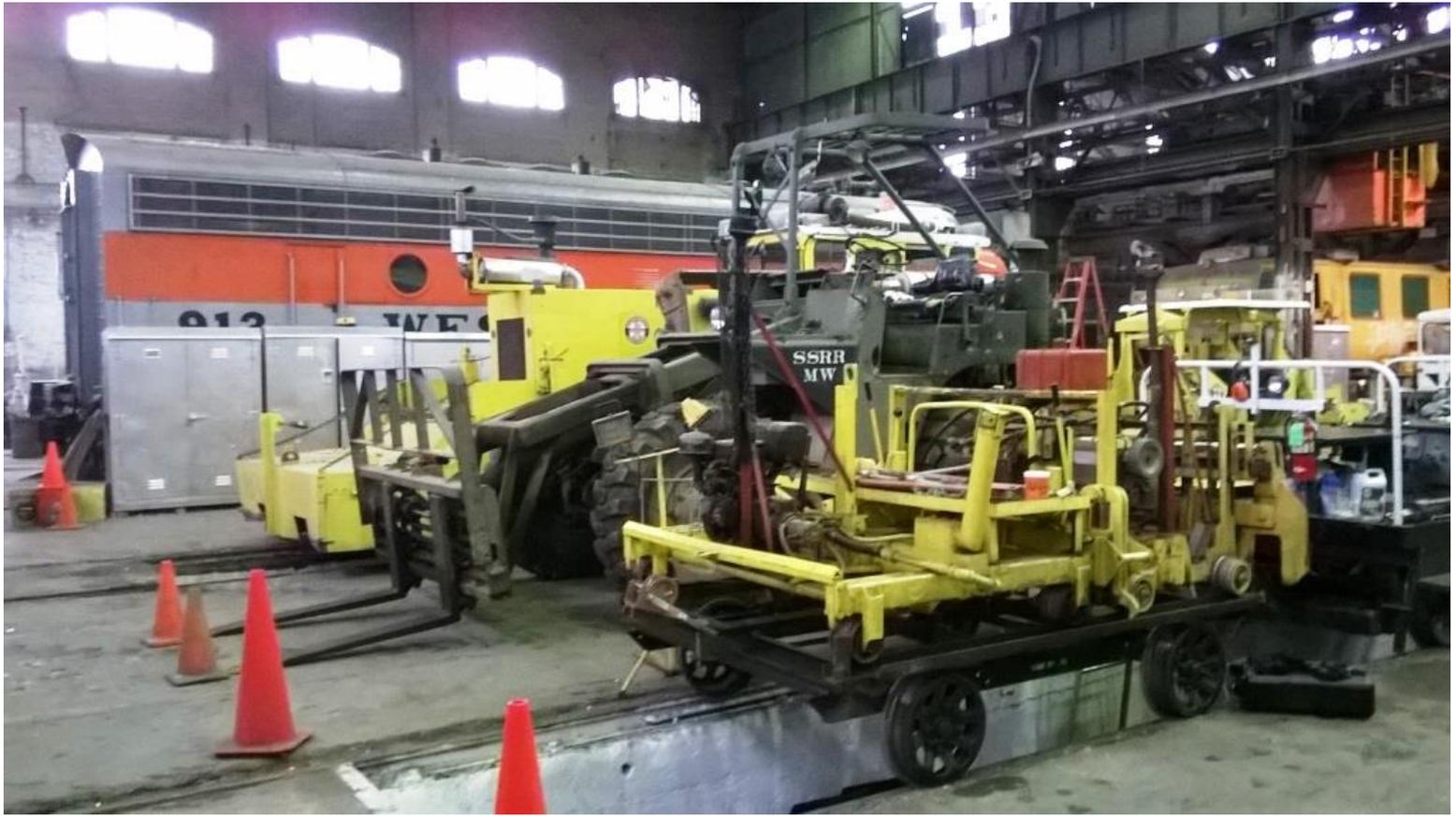
Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



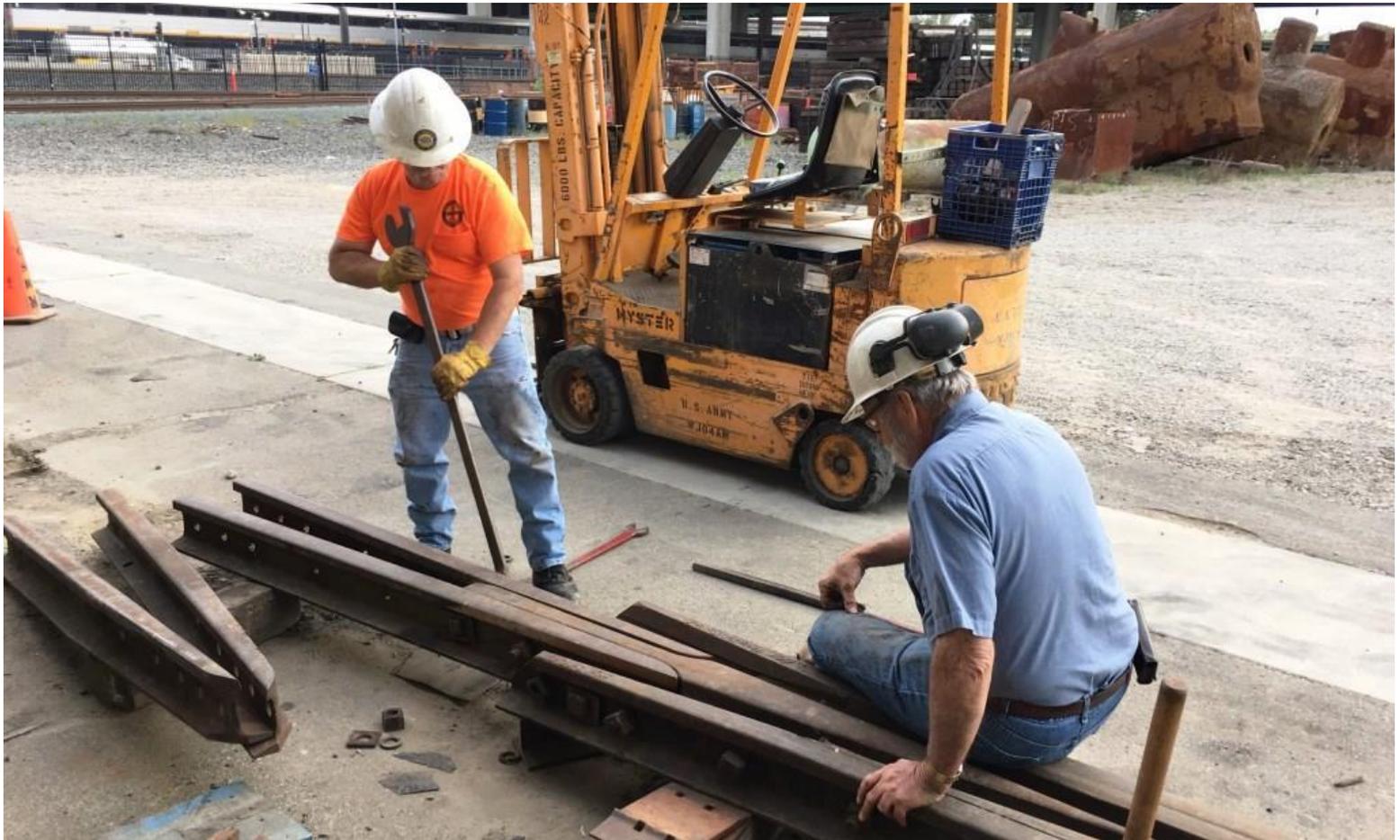
Kyle uses a lining-bar to lever the east turntable rail back into position



Joe replaces a broken bolt at a joint south of Switch 10



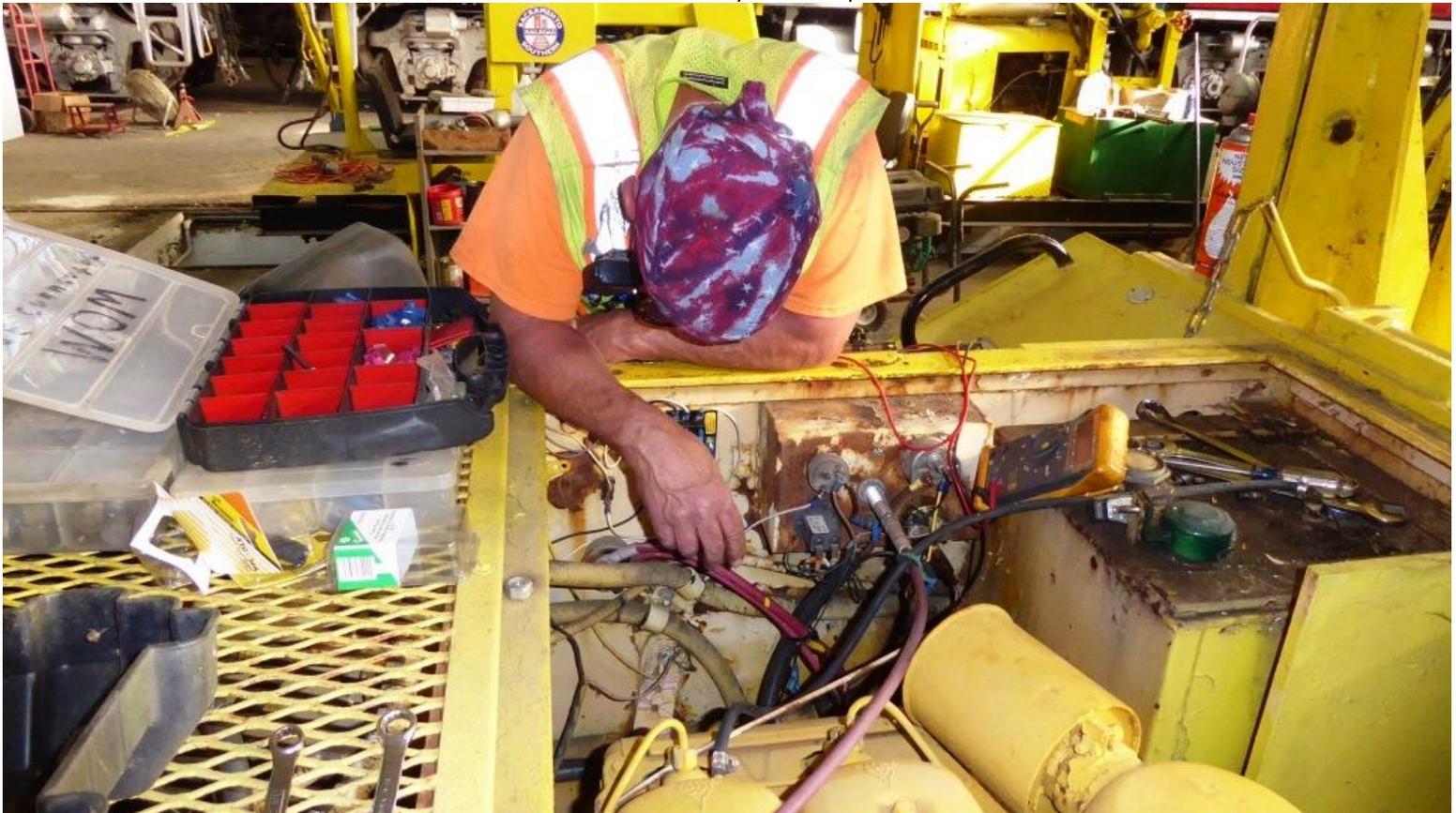
Mike H. moved the original Big Green Machine to the Erecting Shop



After much grinding on the tapered edges, Mike F. and Alan try bolting the wing rails to the frog. Alas, they're still not quite right



Weston and Matt disposed of the old cabinet light-fixture in the big dumpster outside the Boiler Shop which triggered their natural millennial instinct to take as many selfies as possible...



Meanwhile, Joe works on rewiring the Jackson 125



Ed improvises a fix for the gauger's pull-start mechanism



Frank adds a little coolant to the Kalamazoo's radiator



Joe and Alan move the gauger off of its rail-mounted carriage so that it can be used to carry the rail-lifter to the Sutterville Line



Mike F. on Green Machine 2 (GM2) grabs the basket of tie-plates to load on the truck



At Mile Post 3.52 (Suttersville Road), Joe and Steve, set spikes into new ties



Mike F. drives spikes with the pneumatic spike-driver and Harry manages the air-hose as Alan follows slowly behind shoving the compressor



Joe distributes fresh spikes at each new tie



Pam and Joe set spikes



Chris and Matt deploy the rail-lifter



Chris operates the rail-lifter as Heather places a tie-plate



Matt on the motorcar provided head-end power for positioning the rail-lifter



With the lifter over the next tie to be plated, Chris signals Matt on the motorcar to stop



Pam and Clem work their way up the line setting spikes



Harry, Steve, and Alan follow behind driving the set spikes with the pneumatic spike driver



After lunch, Mike F. and Steve plated the ties under joints with special joint-plates



Frank took up the pneumatic spike-driver to drive some spikes.



Alan at the controls of the Kalamazoo keenly follows the signals of the spiking crew as he slowly shoves the compressor up the line



Matt just couldn't pass up the opportunity to drive some spikes, himself



Heather, Joe, and Matt load the rail-lifter onto its carriage



Joe finishes up the spiking for the day



Heather, Joe, and Steve take apart the Nolan Track Cart to stow with the compressor



Steve, on GM2, takes the basket of plates off the truck at the end of the day