

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 18, 2015. The Team had no adult supervision this week. And, you know what that means: "When the cat's away, the monkeys will play." So, before the cat gets back, let's get this update started.

On Tuesday Pat Scholzen, Heather Kearns, Frank Werry, and Frederick Carr were on hand for some MOW fun. Earlier in the day, the Shops crew had moved much of the rolling stock in the Rail Yards onto the new storage track the MOW Team had built for them over the past few weeks. Many on the Shops crew, including Chief Mechanical Officer, Al DiPaolo, commended the MOW Team for the outstanding job it did building this track. In the meantime, the Kalamazoo tug and ballast hoppers had to be returned to Old Sacramento. Conductor Frank led the team that relocated the Kalamazoo and hoppers back onto the old 150 track. Heather did a remarkable job clearing out and organizing an entire bay in the Boiler Shop. Pat did the same in the Erecting Shop. He cleared out and organized a place for the A-4 motorcar to have a new clutch installed. Fred tackled the air leak in the formerly-pink Canon BEB 17 ballast regulator (fondly known as the *USS Sea Tiger*). He found the offending air-line, removed it, and now Heather will be able to procure a new one. It was a good evening of accomplishment.

Thursday started at 7:30 a.m. when Weed Team captain, Mike Taylor, and "Ginsu" Dave Megeath took the chipper down the Setzer Lead to cut a few limbs and test the device. They determined that its blades needed honing which will require a return to the shop. Heather has cleaned out a bay in the Boiler Shop and the chipper will be taken there for new blades. Mike T. and Dave will work on it this coming week. In the evening, Fred, Frank, and Heather took on the task of bringing the A-4 motorcar over to the Erecting Shop. It needs a new clutch and has to be elevated in order to work beneath it. First, the rail-lifts were brought over from the Boiler Shop. Fred hopped on the handy Hyster forklift and maneuvered the parallel pieces of rail across the transfer table and into the Erecting Shop. Once the lifts were in place, Frank on the Hyster carefully carried the A-4 over and placed it in position. When the A-4 returns to service, we'll have a second operating motorcar. With that, the Team declared victory and headed home. Indeed, it was a good evening.

Chris Carlson's arrival at the Erecting Shop on Saturday morning signaled the presence of the pink box. "Sugar-up," Chris commanded to the crew which is precisely what Steve Nemeth, Heather, Ed Moriarty, Michael Florentine, Frank, Clem Meier, and Harry Voss did. The Team would head back out on the line to continue where we left off some weeks ago on the track leveling project down near Mile Post 2.6. In some areas, the west rail was 2.5 inches lower than the east. It may not sound like much but, factoring in that difference up the height of the train-cars results in considerable lean. Mike F. (the lone representative of the "Mikes" on Saturday) hopped into the front-end loader, the bucket of which was loaded with track-jacks. Frank piloted the tamper over the UP Main from the Shops which Conductor Heather conducted. Down on the line, Ed, Steve, Clem, Chris, and Harry began setting jacks, then using a track-level for reference, and lifted the west rail. Frank revved-up the tamper and, one by one, the ties all got rock tamped beneath them. The tamper was really working well. This was a "hop-scotch" process down the line as jacks were removed from one end, they'd be loaded in the loader's bucket and taken further down the line for re-setting and leveling. The process continued right up until train time where we were literally pulling the last jacks as Engineer Harry Forni was calling the MOW EIC seeking permission to pass our red-flag. Once trains were running, however, we couldn't jack-up the track any longer. The intervals between trains were just too short to do the job properly. So, we packed up and headed to Old Sacramento where switch-work beckoned. The good news is that Sunday's train conductor reported that the work we did made a significant difference in reducing the lean of the train through the area. We'll be back out there next Saturday to continue the efforts.

After lunch, the Team took apart Switch 1, which was so clogged with organic debris that it was not functioning properly. Switch 1 is the ground-throw switch at the turntable. It's covered by steel grating to prevent trip-hazards. Steve fetched the green propane forklift to lift off the steel grates. Harry, Mike, Steve, and Chris dug-out all of the mulch impeding the switch mechanism. Chris fired-up the wind-machine and blew the remaining leaf-matter away. Harry and Chris then greased the switch components and oiled the switch machine. Meanwhile, Heather, Steve, and Mike F. headed over to the Business Car Track Switch (no. 8) to do some work. When opened, the stand wobbled so much that it was threatening to fall over. So, Heather, Mike, and Steve pulled the spikes, plugged the holes, and re-spiked the stand. It's now solid as a rock – well, almost. The switch, however, is slightly over-adjusted to the Business Track making it difficult to throw. We'll handle that problem next week. Back at Switch 1, with it cleaned and lubricated, it practically can be thrown with one finger. Job well done! With that, the Team packed-up. Steve took the truck back to Shops. Frank and Conductor Heather returned the tamper to the Rail Yards side over the UP Main. Everything got put to bed and we turned out the lights on a good day shortly before 6 o'clock p.m.

The MOW Team sends a very special "shout-out" to our compatriot and fellow Team member, Pamela Tatro, who underwent knee-replacement surgery last week. Pam is one of the MOW Team's core members and her fellow Team-mates send out our very best wishes to her for a speedy recovery. Also, a special "shout-out" to Scott Inman, who arranged a donation of two five-gallon water jugs from the Southern Pacific Historical Society. No doubt, we'll put them to good use. Thank you, Scott!

This coming week, the Team will gather on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. The Weed Team will work on the chipper. More track-leveling fun will occur on Saturday. 8 o'clock a.m. is doughnut time. Once again, the MOW Team demonstrates the power of volunteerism. These folks accomplish remarkable things and their efforts are appreciated greatly.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



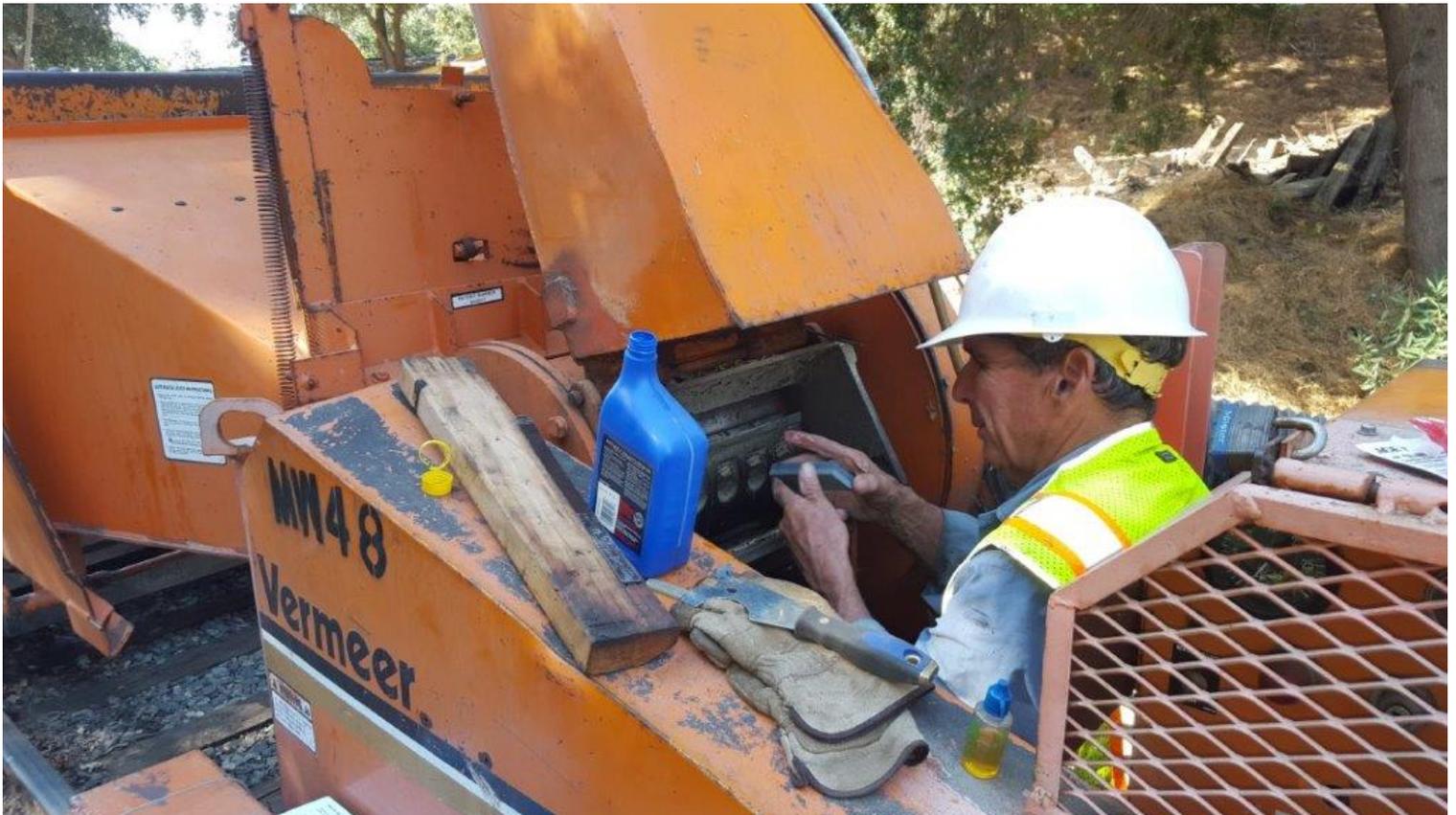
The Kalamazoo tug and ballast hoppers ready to head over to Old Sacramento



Conductor Frank opens negotiations with the Union Pacific dispatcher in Omaha for permission to cross over the UP Main with the Kalamazoo and hoppers



Heather organized and cleared out an entire bay in the Boiler Shop. She did an amazing job



MOW monkey inside the chipper – Mike T. attempting to hone the chipper's blades, although some might think that this is how the limbs actually turn into chips...



Fred takes the rail-lifts into the Erecting Shop



Frank places the A-4 motorcar onto the rail lift



The Team set the jacks



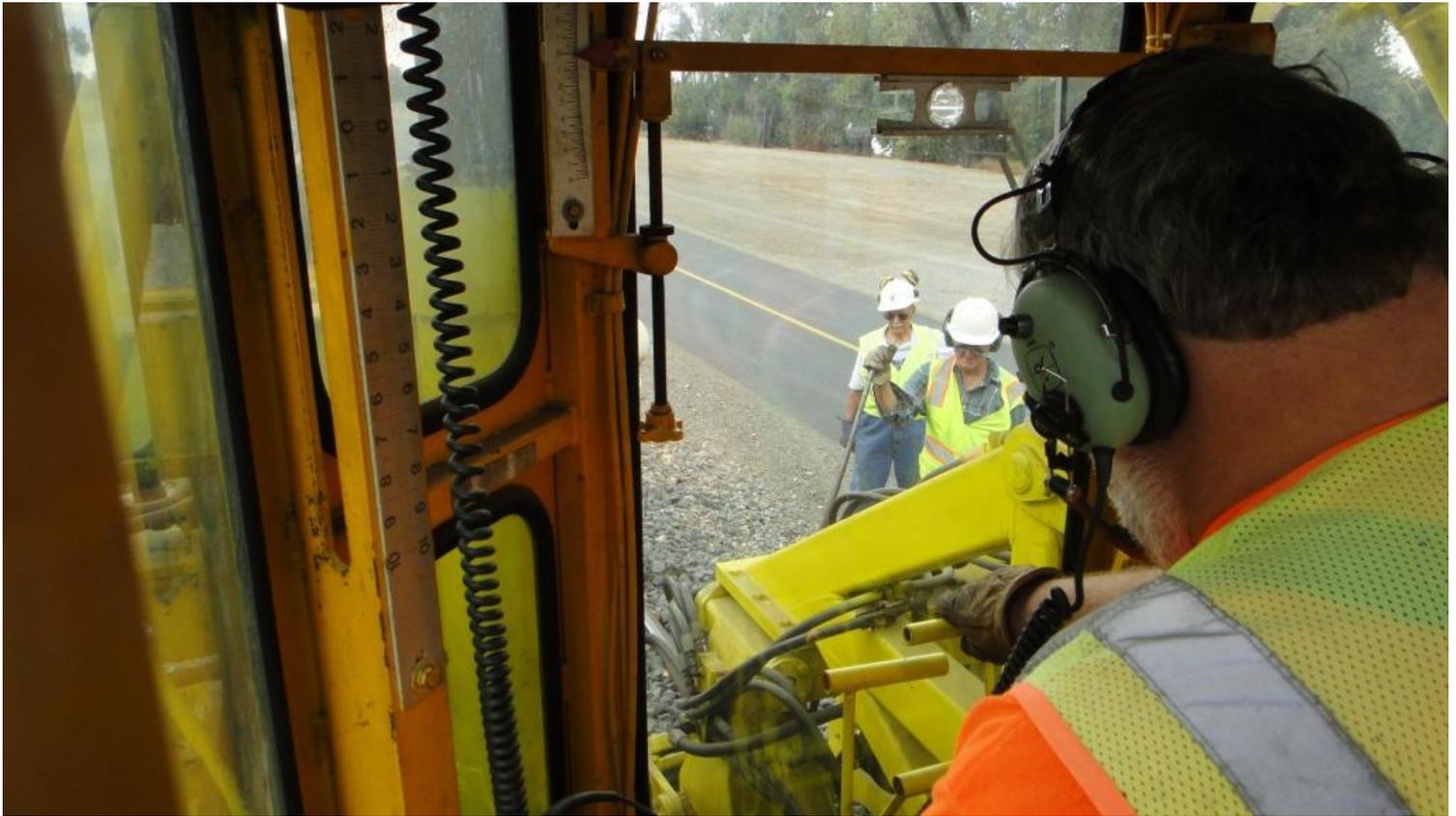
The track level is in place. Clem looks on as Chris jacks-up the west rail and Mike F. unburies the joint



The tamper is the MOW safety-yellow at the end of the rainbow...



Hop-scotching down the line. As the tamper tamps up the raised sections, the jacks are loaded into the bucket of the loader which then heads south. Clem takes a jack for placement as Ed continues to lift-up the west rail level with the east



Frank operates the tamper as Steve and Clem prepare to pull a jack



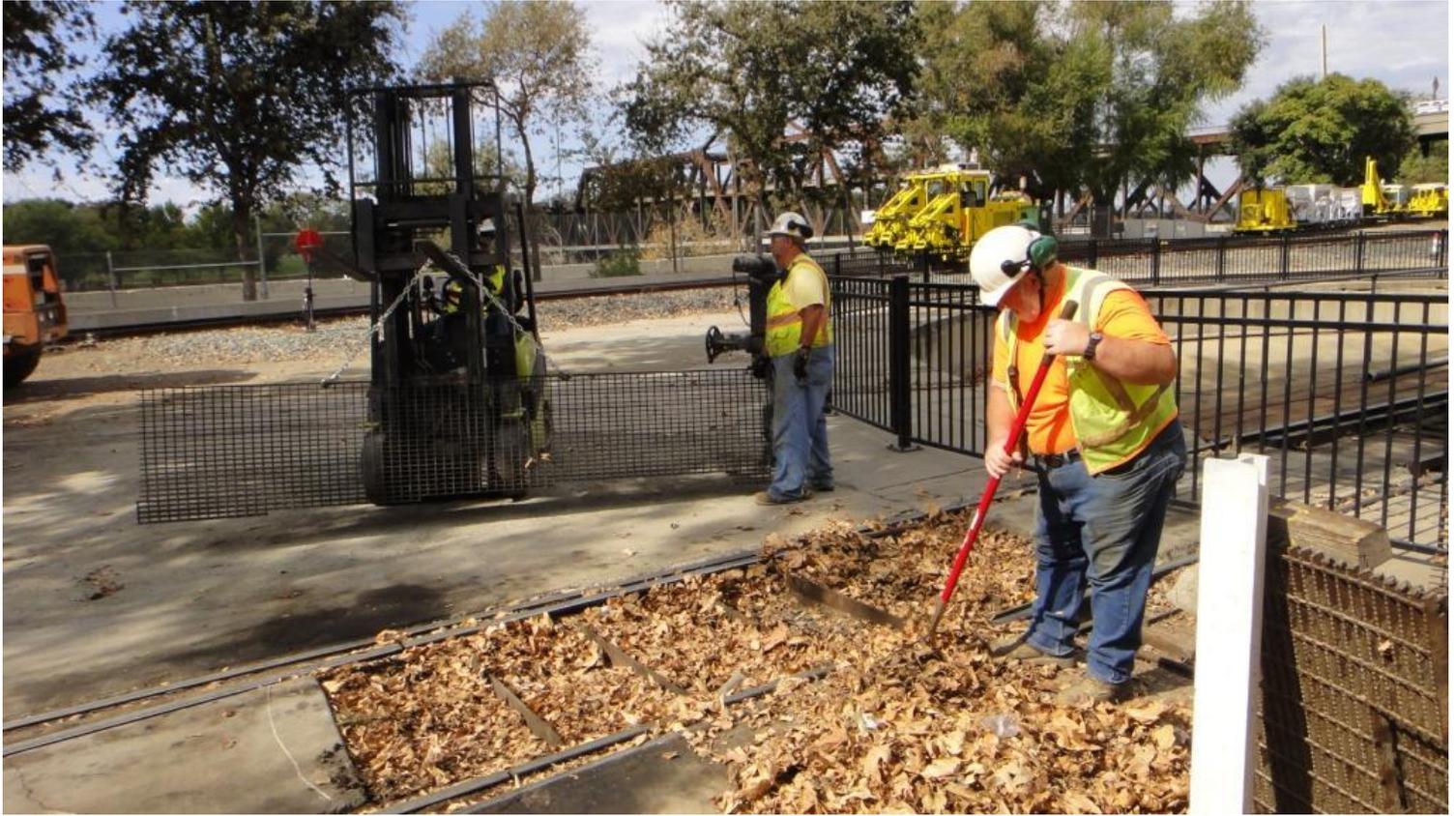
Mike F. guides Frank in the tamper. Chris prepares to manually operate the "squeeze" actuator as Steve and Clem prepare to pull the jack



“OK, enough talk. Let’s go to lunch...”



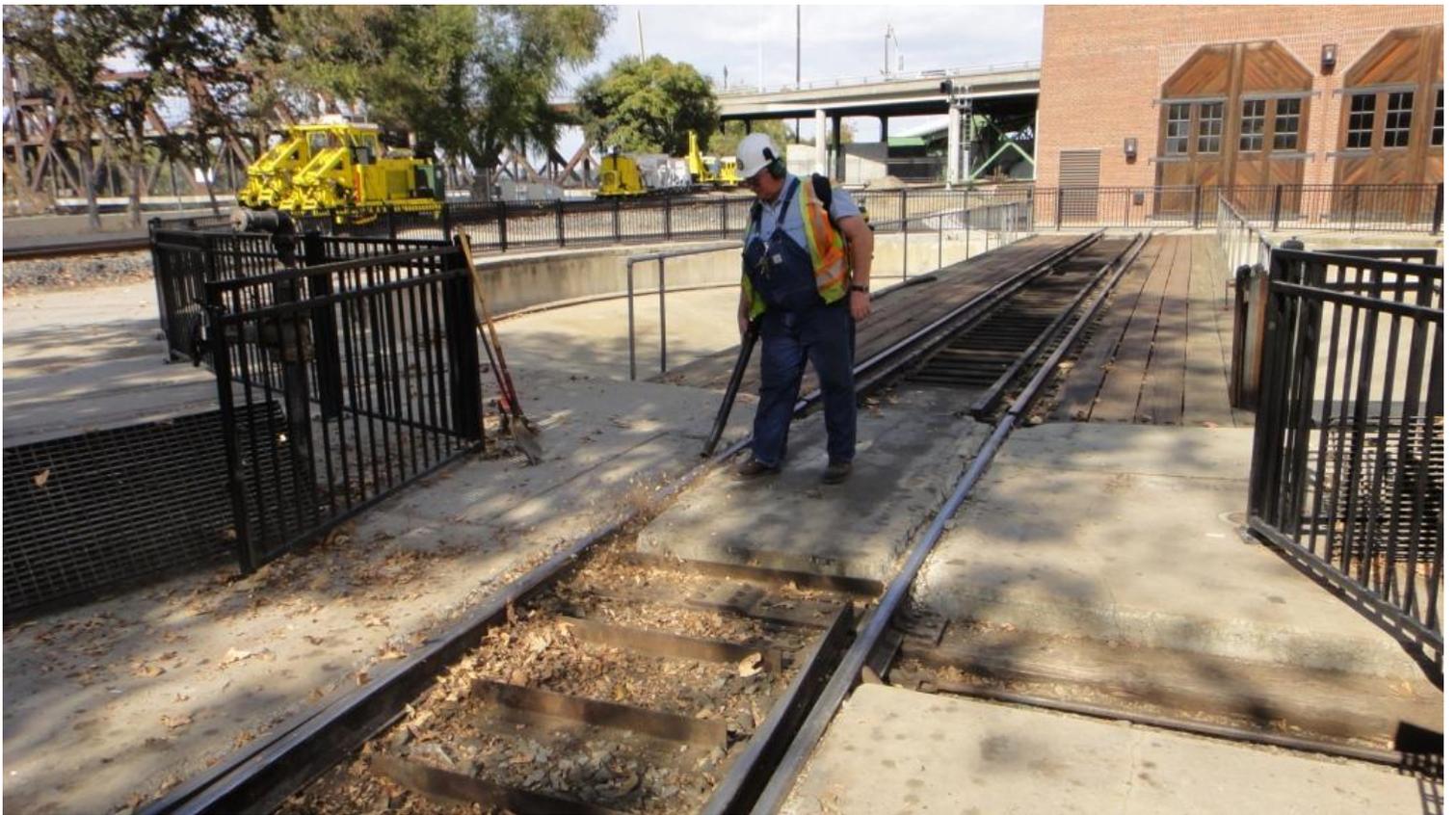
Steve on the forklift lifts the grating from Switch 1. Mike F. and Harry hooked up the chain



No wonder we couldn't see the switch mechanisms. Frank rakes organic debris from the turnout and Mike F. guides Steve on the forklift with the protective grating



Steve demonstrates other talents besides the "world-famous-as-seen-on-TV windmill spiking technique"



Chris brings in the wind-machine to blow away the remaining organic debris



Steve, Mike F., and Heather make repairs to Switch 8



Work on Switch 1 is complete and Steve in the forklift brings in the grating. Frank, Mike F., and Chris guide it into position



Home again, home again, jiggety-jig. Heather operates the transfer table as the tamper is put to bed