

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for December 20, 2014. It's Christmas time and your MOW Team was celebrating the bounty of the season with many great accomplishments this last week. So, let's "Ding Dong Merrily on High" and get this pre-Christmas update a-jingling!

Santa's liberated Elves swung by the Erecting Shop on Tuesday with a gift for the MOW Team. To the surprise of Alan Hardy, Frederick Carr, Cliff Hayes, Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, and Harry Voss, a 1-9/16<sup>th</sup> inch wrench was stashed under the little Christmas tree in the MOW Lounge. It was the one size of wrench missing from our collection and the only size that would work on the fitting of the last remaining hydraulic hose yet to be flushed on the tie-shear. How did the Elves know what we needed? Well, evidently, Fred managed to get word to them for which we were truly grateful. Fred made good use of our new toy by disconnecting and flushing out that hydraulic hose. Now the system is ready to be reassembled. Alan worked on the rail-lifter and then painted it. Pat, Gene, and Cliff headed over to the Boiler Shop to take a look at the malfunctioning front-end loader. The engine would start but it wouldn't move. Well, to make a long story short, it didn't take long for them to diagnose and mitigate the problem and the loader moves once again. The evening ended with a good old-fashion power-chat in the MOW Lounge as we wondered what else the Elves might bring us.

Thursday, more surprises showed up. Another delivery of brand new ties arrived at the Boiler Shop and our friends from Restoration/Mechanical Shops stepped right up to help us out. Bill Martin and Leonard Jones jumped on the big forklifts and unloaded the bundles from the truck. Their efforts on our behalf are greatly appreciated. We now have the entire complement of the ties we ordered earlier this year – all of which will be put in the ground before the railroad's 2015 season kicks off in April (fingers crossed)...

Meanwhile, also on Thursday, Mike Taylor, Chairman and CEO of the mighty Weed Team, headed down to Hood investigate reports of gnomes chopping and cutting away at foliage encroaching on our right-of-way. Mike T. spent the whole day down there, on his own, inspecting the gnomes work and perhaps, chopping and cutting away at some trees and brush, himself. His dedication has no bounds. In the evening at the Shops, Heather Kearns, Fred, and Alan were on hand for more MOW fun. Heather headed over to Old Sacramento to stage for the Team's Saturday activities by re-arranging the work-train consist in the container. Fred, who seems to like doing the dirty work, dug into the hydraulic-fluid tank of the tie-shear and cleaned it thoroughly. Alan continued working on the restoration of the rail-lifter amongst many other things. The Team couldn't function without the behind-the-scenes work that Alan does day-in and day-out.

Saturday, Michael Florentine, Chris Carlson, Harry, Frank Werry, Pam Tatro, Steve Nemeth, Heather, and Alan were nestled all snug in the Erecting Shop with visions of doughnuts dancing in their heads. The plan for the day was to continue with the re-surfacing of the areas around switch-stands with small rock to provide better footing for brakemen when operating the switches. Harry climbed aboard the back-hoe and Mike F. onto the Green Machine with the scoop bucket attachment. They quickly loaded small rock into the bed of the one-ton truck with the lift-bed. Steve, Heather, Frank, Pam, and Alan headed to Clunie. Re-surfacing the three switches at Clunie was our goal for the morning. Chris pulled the A-6 motorcar and flatcar out of the MOW container in Old Sac. and headed south to Clunie. The annual "Santa Run" occurred on Saturday and a thousand "Santas" greeted Chris and the A-6 along Front Street south of the Circle of Lights. It's astounding the things your MOW Team encounters along the way. Anyway, at Clunie, rock was transferred to the bucket of the back-hoe and Harry skillfully laid it around the switches. Chris, Pam, Steve, Heather, and Mike F. used shovels and rakes to spread it about to a minimum distance of three feet around the head-blocks. After completing work around the switches, the Team moved on down the line to gather all the dead ties strewn about the Mainline between the Pioneer Bridge and Broadway and shuttled them down to our dead-tie pile at Setzer Yard.

With all the Mainline Switches completed, the Team moved to the Old Sacramento Yard in the afternoon. We used the remaining rock in the truck to surface around Switch 5, the South Turntable Lead/CPFD Tracks switch. Then, we cut back the dirt bank around Switch 2, the South Turntable Lead/House Track switch. This is the switch that our trusty track inspectors must throw twice weekly when conduction track inspections. The switch mechanisms are in a trough below the surrounding surface which means it is constantly getting buried by dirt and debris. So, Steve and Mike deployed the air compressor and jack hammer to break-up the soil-cement around the switch machine and connecting rod. The area was made level and an 11 foot tie was brought in to act as a retaining wall. Using shovels and mattocks, the entire crew removed enough dirt. This should help prevent the switch mechanisms getting buried. Frank, who is one of our trusty track inspectors, had been co-opted to serve as a conductor on the Polar Express. He did stop by to inspect our work. Needless to say, he gave the Team got two thumbs-up. With that, we headed back to the Shops pleased with all our accomplishments.

Christmas week is upon us and the Team will gather on Tuesday in the Erecting Shop at 5 o'clock. But that's it for the week. MOW is not like Mr. Scrooge and gladly gives the Team Christmas night off. And, **we're taking Saturday off, too.** So, the Shops will be shut tight on Saturday. However, we'll be up and running next week, don't you worry. To all our friends, supporters, and incredible volunteers, have a very Merry Christmas. 2015 looks to be very promising for us so enjoy the holiday season. Merry Christmas one and all!

We'll see you out on the line.

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Fred toils to clean out the tie shear's hydraulic tank



More presents from Santa's liberated Elves! Restoration Shop crewmembers Bill Martin and Leonard Jones kindly unloaded our new bundles of new ties.



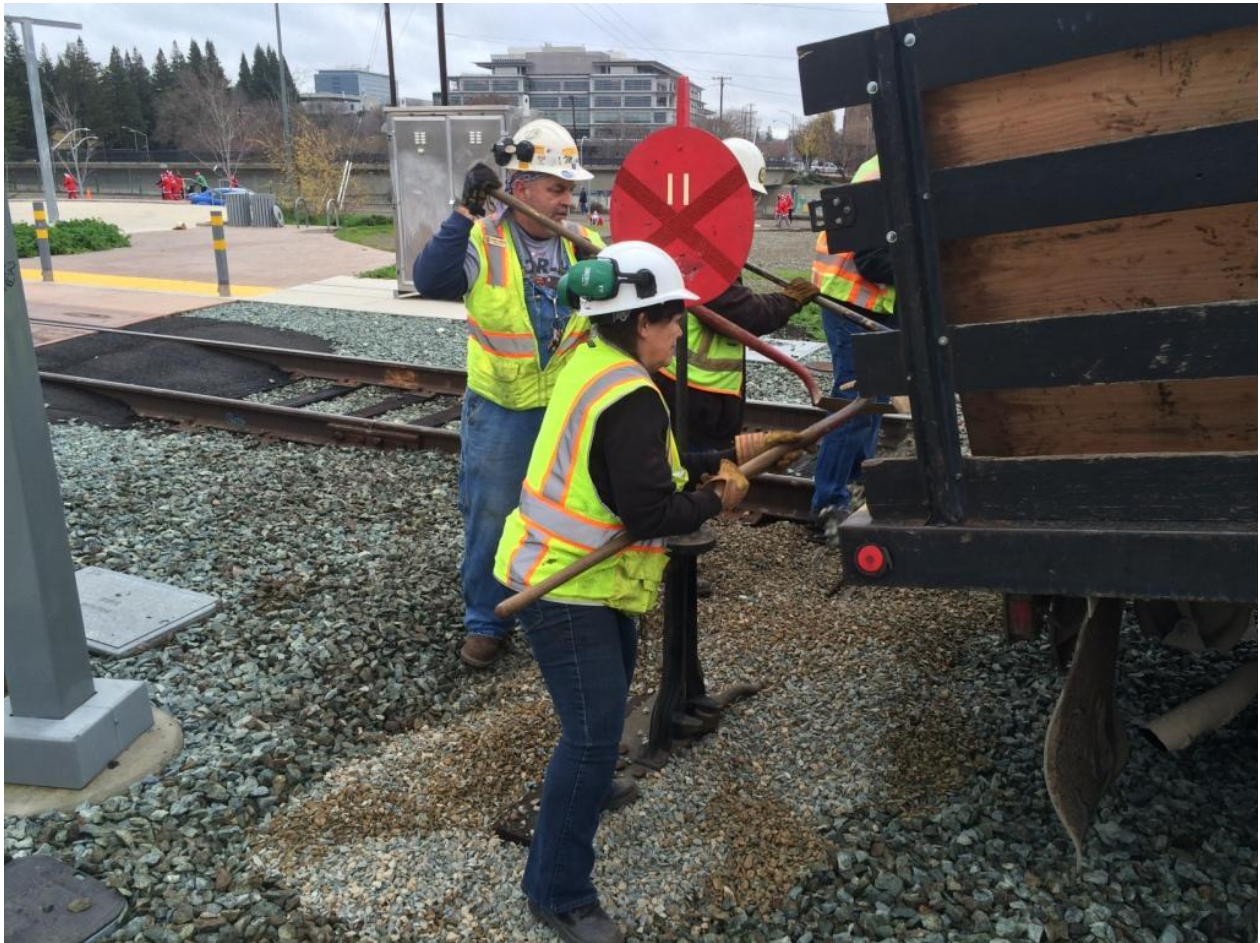


The things your MOW Team encounters out on the line boggles the mind – a “sleigh of Santas” (not sure if that’s the correct collective noun but, it seems to work) threatens to foul the track as Chris pilots the A-6 motorcar to the work-site...



Frank and Heather shovel small rock around the head-block at Switch 11 – North Clunie





Pam and Mike F. scoop rock out from the bed of Truck 14...



Mike F. and Pam make precision adjustments to the new surface





Steve is living proof that volunteering with the MOW Team makes everyone happy!



The crew is one well oiled machine (that doesn't break down...)





Steve and Frank load dead ties onto the flat car which Chris will shuttle down to the Setzer yard



Chris and Frank unload dead ties at Setzer





Steve and Chris unload dead ties at Setzer Yard



Chris and Heather work under the eagle-eyes of Jim Bays, engineer of the SP 6051...





The Team puts their backs into it...



Frank magically transforms into a Polar Express conductor and joins Chris, Heather, Alan, Steve, and Mike in a victory photo