

# AMADOR SAWMILL & MINING ASSOCIATION



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## President's Report -- October, 2014

2014 has been a year of change for ASMA.

Our initiative to locate a site for a restoration shop has gone through several stages. Local inquiries in the Plymouth area were unsuccessful due to land prices well above market values. ASMA concluded negotiations in Jackson without reaching a lease agreement. ASMA is currently in negotiations with the City of Sutter Creek for a long term lease of a limited area within the city-owned historic Central Eureka Mine site.

The Amador Fair went exceptionally well July 24-27. The logs this year were donated by Tom Blackman (Coldwell Banker Realty), Sierra Mountain Construction, and Oneto Brothers. Thanks to Eddie Oneto for coordinating the trucking. The 35 logs donated consisted of Douglas fir, cedar, and sugar pine. Several cut orders were completed and the volunteers had a great time!

On September 13th and 14th, we fired up the sawmill boiler again to complete the cutting of large sugar pine logs. An Alaskan chain saw was loaned by Bill Braun to reduce the oversized logs to 12" slabs. These slabs were then run through the circular sawmill to produce 2"x12" boards.

Our sales were very successful this year. We sold some of the lumber cut during the Fair, as well as furniture and other items created by our woodcrafters. After the Fair we had two large sales of restored equipment - the Marvel Saw, and the Tennant Sweeper.

The annual ASMA potluck dinner will be held at the Amador Fairgrounds in the Spur Bldg. on Saturday, November 1, 2014, starting at 4 pm. Our chefs Ken and Steve are planning another of their extravaganzas. One of the Fair volunteers, Kathy Simmons has volunteered to bake us 4 pies as a thank you for all we do!

The last Board of Directors meeting for 2014 will be held before the dinner at 1pm in the same location. I invite all volunteers to attend the meeting to hear and discuss the latest planning and progress reports.

Bill Braun  
President  
ASMA

## Amador Sawmill And Mining Association Is Looking For Volunteers



A.S.M.A. is expanding its program in steam sawmill history: Volunteers are needed to learn how to operate historical exhibits. Do you want to learn how to operate a sawmill, a stationary steam engine, a steam powered donkey engine, or wood and oil fired steam boilers? Or are you interested in restoring old machine tools? If so, contact Bill at: (209) 245-3448 or e-mail [info@amadorsawmill.org](mailto:info@amadorsawmill.org)



P.S.—we also need volunteers to help us in Fundraising, Public Relations, Communications, Etc. too!



## **Boiler Safety Class and Yarding Donkey Operation**

*A splendid opportunity came and went, or  
See what you missed!*

By Tom Innes

This was a good chance to learn the care and feeding of our boilers.

On April 12 and 13 of this year, ASMA gave a course focusing on boiler safety and operation. The course was held at the Amador County Fairgrounds and included both classroom and hands on work.

We had 14 volunteers attend and most came back for the second day.

Bill Braun and Tom Innes taught the class. There were six chapters in the syllabus and several appendices. Included was a good write-up on the Dutton boiler and steam hoist. The syllabus is a good reference for boiler operations and descriptions of the boiler and its support equipment. Details of startup and operations along with valve operation for the sawmill boiler and steam donkey were included and can be used as a checklist to verify proper sequencing of the various controls.

Boiler and steam safety were the principal reasons for the course. ASMA can now point to the fact the operators have been trained in operation and system safety. Safety becomes an important issue during sawmill operations. There are many moving parts along with several features that can cause injury. Besides the general topic of steam safety, there is the saw blade to account for along with several belt drives. The carriage is also a source of hazard to workers. In general, that is the reason we try to keep spectators at a safe distance during operations. Under controlled conditions we can escort spectators, but this is done when it can be done safely and when a knowledgeable person can escort them.

A number of topics were covered. We discussed the various classifications of boiler with focus on the vertical fire tube boilers used at the sawmill and donkey.

We described the sawmill boiler and its settings including the foundation, mounting and auxiliary systems such as grates, ash pan and firebox access. Included was a brief description of the steam donkey boiler.

Boiler controls and monitoring systems was presented in detail. This included the safety valve operation and adjustments. Of course, any adjustments are to be made by a qualified source certified by the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors. This is the same group that certifies shops and welders performing repair work on existing boilers.

Water level is the primary safety control the operators have over the boilers. In general, keeping the water level within proper limits ensures safe operation. The most common measurement used is the sight glass. Part of the operators task is to monitor and control water with the sight glass. The Penberthy Injector is used to add water as necessary. Note there are two of them so there is redundancy in the system. This emphasizes the importance of maintaining the proper water level.

A good description of staybolts was given. These devices support the firebox and maintain the distance between the firebox and the main boiler shell.

Steam properties, combustion principles and steam generation along with boiler crew responsibilities was discussed.

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## *Continued from page 2....*

The class prepared the sawmill boiler and fired it. This was a good chance to gain some hands-on experience. All in the class were given the opportunity to add wood to the firebox, watch water levels and add water as necessary with the injectors. Appendix A was a good guide to this operation.



Most of this was done on the first day. The second day wrapped up loose ends and a good description on yarding was presented. There are a number of guides to be found on the web by searching yarding.

The class was tasked to prepare the steam donkey for operations. This was done and pressure set at around 90 PSIG. The donkey was located in a field such that the class could experience yarding over a reasonable distance. A large truck was set up as an anchor for the cable that was being used. One drum on the donkey was setup for this. All the class participated in the task and it was really fun. The task was to drag a log from the anchor truck toward the donkey. When most of the cable unwound, the log was disconnected from the cable and fork lifted back to the anchor. The steam throttle valve controlled the drum speed. There was a clutch to engage the drum and a break if it moved at excessive speed.



Eddie Oneto gave a quick class in log yarding techniques, and showed us how to set choker cables. Each participant got to set chokers, "chase" the logs (remove chokers), and pull in the logs by running the cable drums on the donkey.



*Continued on page 4....*



## ***Continued from page 3...***

In general, the course was instructive and it seemed like everyone had a good time, especially during the yarding exercise. After all, how many people still alive today have yarded logs with a steam donkey? See, we are not all work and no play.

We would like to add safety courses on other parts of mill operation, for example, Corliss operations and sawing of logs.

## **MACHINE RESTORATION UPDATE**

By Ron Edgar

Thought I would take a few minutes and bring everyone up to date on what's been happening within our Restoration Group.

First I would like to welcome Mel Palmer and Erik Lander to our group. It is our pleasure to have them join the team. They are both multi-talented and they make a great addition to our team.

A new school year is upon us. Last school year we worked with 6 students from the Amador High School Agricultural class. They were each given a project (old machine tools) to restore and we mentored them until it was finished. Equipment was donated to us for this use. One of the students won BEST OF SHOW, with his bench top drill press, at the Amador County Fair. We are currently starting this years program and are hoping to add a lot more technical information to the curriculum.

Fortunately we have been able to add a lot more donated machinery to our inventory. This first list of machines is in such good shape that we are planning to use them in our restoration shop. Most of these were donated from San Jose State University.

They are: Vertical Mill (Gorton), Horizontal Mill (Kearney & Trecker Model D), Lathe 15" (LeBlond), Miller DC stick welder, Miller Mig welder, Peerless (power hack saw), misc. grinders and belt sander. The donations would not have happened without the efforts and connections of Jim Hall.

We were also gifted 4 lathes by Arnold Hof. These machines were specifically donated to help our school program. These machines are: 3 Logan 14" lathes and 1 South Bend 9A.

We are in the final phases of finishing the custom trailer that was designed and welded by Joe Harralson. Our portable early 1900's Machine Shop pallet now has its own trailer. This will make moving it and showing it a lot easier. A big thanks to everyone who helped make this possible.

Last but not least. We were given an old rusty Marvel, Series 8, Mark 1, vertical Bandsaw. It was in pretty bad shape but we knew if we fixed it up it could bring in a fair amount of money for the Association. Long story, short. We finally finished it after lots of hard work and after replacing every bearing. Bottom line is we sold it for \$9,000.00. Not too shabby for a bunch of guys getting together once a week for donuts and coffee.

If you're interested in joining our restoration group, please give me a call (Ron Edgar @ 209-304-7483), or Email me at [4edgars@msn.com](mailto:4edgars@msn.com).

Ron Edgar



## **STEAM FOR THE SAW MILL or PILEBUTTS TO DONKEY PUNCHERS**

*How two San Francisco Bay pile drivers became part of Living History in Amador County.*

As Told By Tom Innes and Alan Langmuir

In the previous newsletter, we told how the tugs pushed the barges, loaded with the old pile drivers, navigated the bay, sailed under the Oakland bay bridge and then hit “rough seas” on the way to Benicia Railway Bridge.

Here we are continuing the story as written in the 2004 Booklet *“Pilebutts to Donkey Punchers:”*

### *Installment 4—Heading toward the Carquinez Straights*

The huge roller hit our port bow and the two towers began a slow dance, pitching forward and then rolling apart. The large fenders, 12” x 12” Doug Fir logs chained to each barge, started to rub and grind. Then the tugs started to get thrown around. In the wheelhouse 20 feet up, we had to hang on tight. Maybe this was what it was like in one of those San Francisco earthquakes. It was getting scary. Bill, the only seasoned seaman on board, worked his way up to see Mark.

The barges were tossing us around. Tom jumped over the two foot wide gap between the barges and stumbled over a big deck cleat. He got his balance and pointed at the towers about 50 feet up. He got in real close and yelled in my ear. The noise of the engines and wind drowned out most of what he said but I got the part about, “don’t stand here the towers are twisting!” We went inside the steam shack and looked up at the towers. I could see that the four 1” steel cables to the top of the towers were whipping from side to side about 4 feet and the tower on number three driver was twisting and shaking. The other tower seemed OK, and wasn’t twisting. It was hard to look up and keep our balance, but we could hear better that way. Water was sloshing up about 2 feet high between the barges.

Mark found he could minimize most of the forces that were affecting us by crabbing at an angle of about 45 degrees to our course. Dick shut down the gas pump so we could hear better. That’s when we heard a big crack over by the gap between the barges. We all got closer and could see that two ½ inch chains had parted and one of the fender logs had slipped backwards and under another fender. After about two minutes of grinding and popping it slid out and went between the two tugs without hitting the propellers! Lucky, but we were starting to come apart!

The six 2 inch lines holding us together were groaning as they stretched, which was good, but they were old and looked used up. We hoped for the best. Then we heard a loud bang up in the towers. The two 30 foot long steel I-beams, 10” x 10”, cross mounted one on each tower had slammed together and one was loose in its sliding tube. Dick quickly saw that the hold down lines had come loose and snubbed the port ones and then moved the I-beam on the starboard tower about 6 feet away so they couldn’t hit together. Quick action and one problem solved.

More chains broke and we lost another fender. After awhile I could feel that our pitching and rolling had quieted down once we got behind Angel Island’s leeward side, but we were going really slowly. Bill came down off Shorty reporting that Mark said we were going against the ebb tide now and he would try to keep us in the shallow waters around Southampton Shoals to make any distance. ***Continued on page 6....***

*Continued from page 5....*

He was setting up to go under the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and would take the tallest east span.

Things calmed down and we all had our sandwiches. We were making about 1 knot with the engines purring along. Rich had moved back to his position as lookout at the bow of the barges. We had some time, so we strolled around and looked into the drawers and lockers finding all sorts of steam engine tools and spare parts.

We were really going slowly now. Between the effects of the ebb tide and the underpowered tugs, we were apparently off the traffic control's moving target radar and they were calling to ask us to identify ourselves!

After passing under the San Rafael Bridge, we struggled along the western shore of Contra Costa County. We passed Richmond, San Pablo, Pinole, Rodeo, Hercules, and Crockett. I can't imagine a more scenic route especially if oil refineries turn you on. It was getting late and the tide was still working against us. We finally passed under the Carquinez Bridge. The new suspension bridge is gorgeous at night as there is lighting along the main suspension cables. Our masts seemed almost to hit the bridge.

Reality set in and it became clear we were not going to finish the trip without an overnight stay along the way. The railroad bridge at Benicia was still closed. ***To Be Continued....***

## ***ASMA NOW USING THE "ALASKAN CHAIN SAW SAWMILL"***

By Phil Kreiss

There are many logs available to the mill that are high quality, but are too large to be cut by the mill's 48 inch blade. With the help of Eddie Oneto, we have now solved that problem by using a borrowed "Alaskan Sawmill". The rig consists of 2 Stihl power heads, one on each side of a 52 inch chain that is set up on a 2x6 frame on the log—The log is then cut into large bolts that will fit in the ASMA mill. On Saturday Sept 14 ASMA got the sawmill up and running to cut a special run of logs brought in by Eddie Oneto—these were large sugar pine and Douglas fir logs that were too big for the mill, so they were pre-cut with The "Alaskan Chain Saw Sawmill" a few days before. Eddie showed the Mill volunteers how to set it up and run it. ***Continued on page 7...***



# AMADOR SAWMILL & MINING ASSOCIATION



## *Continued from page 6...*

The mill ran continuously for two days without any breakdowns or problems and cut a lot of lumber! It also produced a full trailer load of sawdust. Eddie Oneto took a large load of lumber with his flatbed truck, and the rest is now stored at the ASMA warehouse. In appreciation for their hard work, Eddie bought the crew lunch, and a great time was had by all. We are sure that they all slept soundly Sunday night, and a few straggled back in on Monday for a day of cleanup.



Photos: Upper Left—Bolts cut by Alaskan Chain Saw Sawmill ready for sawing. Upper Right—Sawing a bolt. Lower Left—Stacking cut lumber. Lower Right—Loading lumber on the truck.

## ASMA IS FILLING UP ITS WAREHOUSE

The ASMA warehouse is getting a lot of use these days. It is not only being used to store and cure lumber cut at the mill for re-sale and use by the furniture makers, but is also the home of many pieces of donated machinery and tools taken in by the Restoration crew. Many of the guys are staying busy moving things around to make room for more restoration projects, while others are planning on moving more things in. There is plenty of floor space, but a few of the volunteers are now thinking that it may fill completely up!



## *ASMA Puts its Lumber to Good Use*

A few of the ASMA volunteers with woodworking skills have decided that cut lumber sitting in the warehouse would make great furniture, and this furniture should be offered to the public to help pay expenses at the ASMA sawmill. Ken McCoy and Steve Bishop have designed nice looking patio tables, benches and end tables, and then built them out of redwood and Douglas fir. Ed Arata has gone wild building rustic picnic tables, work benches, tool boxes, miniature kid's picnic tables, toys and other items out of rough cut pine. Sales of these items went well at the County Fair, and several of the items have been special ordered and sold to interested buyers near and far from Amador County.

If anyone is interested in purchasing some of the custom furniture, or wish further information, contact Ken McCoy at [kmmccoy@cal.net](mailto:kmmccoy@cal.net).



## 2014 AMADOR COUNTY FAIR CREW PHOTOS

### MACHINE SHOP—RESTORATION CREW



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mel Palmer, Joe Harralson, Jim Hall, Ron Edgar, Alan Langmuir, Dave Linqvist

### BOILER CREW



LEFT TO RIGHT: Matthew Maiers, Frank Tower, Eric McConnon, Alex Sharp, Mike Presson.



## POKERVILLE MINE CREW

LEFT TO RIGHT: John Tower, Bob Wolin, Jim Headd, Bill Baldwin, Jerry Virtue,  
SITTING: "Doc" Kardas with friend.

## CORLISS ENGINE ROOM CREW

LEFT TO RIGHT: Joe Harralson, Alan Hiatt,  
Phil Kreiss, Bill Braun



## STEAM DONKEY CREW

LEFT TO RIGHT: Tom Innes, Richard Hansen.

## SAWMILL CREW— 2014 Amador County Fair



**Back Row—Left to Right:** Jim Headd, Elaine Carpenter, Mike Presson, Bill Baldwin, “Doc” Kardas with his friend, John Tower, Frank Tower.

**Middle Row—Left to Right:** Alex Sharp, Vera Headd, Steve Bishop, Ken McCoy, Matthew Maiers, Chris Kott, Eric McConnon, Austin Ford, Eddie Oneto, Mel Palmer,

**Front Row—Left to Right:** Tom Innes, Richard Hansen, Bill Braun, Alan Hiatt, Ron Edgar, Joe Harralson, Alan Langmuir, Dave Linqvist, Jim Hall.

**Seated to Right Front:** Jerry Virtue, Phil Kreiss.

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Photos Courtesy: Pages 1, 3,- Phil Kreiss Page 6,- Eddie Oneto Page 7,- Phil Kreiss  
Page 8,- Ed Arata, Ken McCoy, Steve Bishop, Phil Kreiss, Pages 9,10,11,12,- Barbara Kreiss

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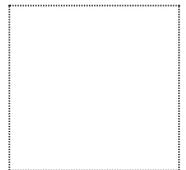
## Upcoming Events:

DATE	TIME	EVENT
To Be Announced		Special Cuts at Sawmill for lumber orders.
Saturday, Nov. 1, 2014	1 P.M. to 7 P.M.	SAWMILL DAY AND APPRECIATION DINNER. Where: Amador Fairgrounds, Spur building. This event is held for all volunteers/families and invited guests.
Twice a Month On Wednesdays	Contact Ron Edgar For Times	MACHINE RESTORATION GROUP Workdays—Contact Ron Edgar at: <a href="mailto:4edgars@msn.com">4edgars@msn.com</a>
To Be Announced	8:00 A.M. to -----	Volunteer Workdays at Sawmill, Shop or Storage Hangar.

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AMADOR COUNTY SAWMILL HISTORY:  
ALIVE AND WELL FOR THE FUTURE.