



THE AMADOR SAWMILL & MINING ASSOCIATION, INC.

A non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to preserving the sawmill and mining history of the Sierra Foothills in California



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ASMA NEWSLETTER
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President’s Report - January 2018

Welcome to the New Year, 2018.

As we enter into this year’s activities, it is only fitting to reflect back over the changes that 2017 brought to ASMA.

The most sobering change was the passing of Jim Hall in September. Jim was unique in many ways. His educational skills with the youth in our shop course at Amador High School was exceptional. Ron Edgar, Joe Harralson and Phil Kreiss have a more detailed background on Jim in this newsletter. Jim is missed greatly, and the opportunity to work with him was a privilege.

2018 will bring changes to ASMA. One of those changes will be the transfer of the Restoration Shop lease to the Amador Community Foundation for the Knight Foundry Alliance. Also the Machine Shop course at Amador High School will be transferred to the ACF/Alliance. These programs are more in line with the new Knight Foundry Alliance than ASMA and this change has been mutually agreed to by both parties. We at ASMA wish all the best to KFA for their 2018 recovery and restoration of the historic Knight Foundry.

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Phil Kreiss was elected to the ASMA Board of Directors as the Treasurer and Cliff Carpenter was elected Director. These were to fill the vacancies left by Jim Hall’s passing and Ron Edgar’s resignation. Ron is a key leader in the Knight Foundry Alliance. We thank Ron for his hard work in leading the Restoration Shop and High School programs. Welcome to Cliff Carpenter and Phil Kreiss for their volunteering to help lead ASMA into the future.

This year ASMA will refocus on the its primary mission of the steam sawmill and mining displays at the Amador Fair Grounds. That refocus will include monthly workdays at the sawmill on the third Saturday of each month, excluding July and December. On January 20th the workday project will be the rebuilding of the sawmill log deck. The existing rotted log bunks will be replaced with steel I beams.

Thank you to all volunteers over the years for making ASMA’s preservation efforts come to life and continuing into the future.

Bill Braun, President, ASMA



In Memory of Jim Hall

By Phil Kreiss, with help from Ron Edgar and Joe Harralson

ASMA members were deeply saddened by the loss of Jim Hall. He passed away on Sept. 26, 2017 from cancer, and a memorial was held in his honor on Oct. 28. Jim was a driving force behind many ASMA projects, including the Restoration Shop, the Mobile Machine Shop Display and the Amador High School Machine Shop Program. Jim had a long relationship with the educational community: He taught high school metal shop, belonged to the Calif. Blacksmith Association and the Calif. Industrial and Technical Education Association, where he was a past President and Treasurer. At his memorial many of his colleagues at the CITE came wearing hard hats and said Jim was an “Iron Guy”. Joe Harralson said that Jim always made everyone feel that they were important to him. Bill Braun said that whatever mission Jim took up, he was fully immersed in it.



Jim, who hailed from Tennessee, served as a corpsman in the Navy. He met his wife Donna at Camp Pendleton—she was a nurse at the hospital there. He also served as a corpsman in the Marine Corps in Viet Nam. He was proud of his service, and always referred to the men he looked after as “My Marines”.

Jim attended college and trained as an industrial arts shop teacher, receiving a master’s degree in education. He was a metal shop teacher at El Dorado High School for 20 years, teaching machine shop, foundry work, welding and fabrication. Joe Harralson remembers that one of his daughters, while in high school, had a friend in Jim’s class, who spoke very highly of him. Later he served with the California State Office of Education. Jim also served as a judge in manufacturing and robotic competitions at colleges in Southern California. Jim had connections with shop teachers and machinists all over

the state of California, and worked with them to acquire machinery for the ASMA Amador H.S. shop program, and also helped other high schools receive donated equipment: Jim made a great effort to bring back industrial and machine programs to high schools in Calif.

Continued on Page 3....



Jim Hall -- Continued from Page 2

Jim was an avid hunter and fisherman. Every year he and his family took a trip to Canada where they hunted, fished and went crabbing. He also taught gun safety for the National Rifle Association, and belonged to a group that picked up road killed deer for the California Fish and Wildlife Department. Jim did most of the butchering, 40 or 50 animals a year, and then they were frozen for later consumption. The group would have an annual feast, where meat from many different animals was served.

Jim was very passionate about foundry work: Joe Harralson met him at a foundry class, and later he and Jim put on a foundry class in Placerville. They became friends, and Joe “talked” Jim into volunteering in the ASMA restoration shop. At first, Bill Braun wondered: “Who is this mountain man that Joe dragged in? However, Jim immediately immersed himself in the restoration projects and showed his machinist expertise in everything he did.

Jim and Ron Edgar developed the Amador High School shop program from the ground up and the school embraced it wholeheartedly. Jim was on top of everything in the school shop, and told the students often that “you have just got to understand this!” By the end of the school year his students were running lathes and mills and other equipment and fabricating and restoring machinery.

Jim was a director on the ASMA board, and along with the high school program, he was an active member of the ASMA restoration team, and worked to bring in lots of old equipment, machinery and furniture for the shop to use and restore. Ron Edgar said that “Jim could never say no to a machine.” Jim was also big on safety: before the saw started up at the ASMA sawmill at the Fairgrounds, Jim held a safety meeting and talked to the volunteers about being aware of dangerous situations and also dehydration and heat exhaustion in the summer during the fair. Recently, Jim was very active in the Knight Foundry Alliance, and spent many hours helping to restore the site. When he became ill, he was adamant in telling other volunteers “Knight Foundry is a gem—don’t let it get away!”

Jim’s passing will be a great loss to ASMA, and many other organizations, and will be a personal loss to his family and many friends. His contributions to ASMA and many others will always be remembered. We will all miss him.

Amador Sawmill And Mining Association Is Looking For Volunteers

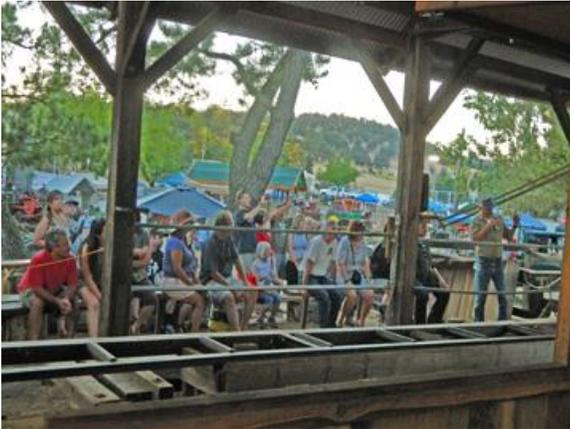
A.S.M.A. is expanding its program in steam sawmill history: Volunteers are needed to learn how to operate historical exhibits. Do you want to learn how to operate a sawmill, a stationary steam engine, a steam powered donkey engine, or wood and oil fired steam boilers? If so, contact Bill Braun at (209)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

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



Photos from the Fair -- July 2017

It's been a long time since the Amador County Fair in July, but I hope you find this sampling of photos interesting:



Austin Ford explains the sawmill to the crowd



Matt Maiers and Frank Tower roll logs up to the carriage



Eric McConnon and Amber Keeny light up the boiler



Bill Braun does some quick repairs on the Corliss steam engine



John Tower and Dave Bibby saw a timber



Alyssa Kascak with a load of lumber heading to San Diego



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More Fair Photos.....ASMA Crews—July 2017



Top Left—Boiler crew: L to R—Matt Maiers, Allyssa Kascak, Chris Kott, Russell Moore, Todd Moore.

Top Right—Donkey crew: Richard Hansen, Tom Innes.

Center Left—Engine crew: L to R—Phil Kreiss, Joe Harralson, Bill Braun.

Center Right—Mobil Machine Shop crew: L to R—Eric Lander, Joe Harralson, Ron Edgar, Jim Hall, Dave Linquist.

Bottom Left—Pokerville Mine crew: L to R—Bob Wolin, Robert Richardson, John Tower, Frank Tower, Matt Maiers, Robert Critz with sons.



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The Sawmill Crew—Amador County Fair, July 2017



Back Row, Left to Right: Frank Tower, Ron Edgar, Jim Hall, Mel Palmer, Eric McConnon.
Center Row, Left to Right: Brian Gibson, Dave Linquist, Richard Hansen, John Tower, Matt Maiers, Chris Kott, Alyssa Kascak.
Front Row, Left to Right: Ken McCoy, Steve Bishop, Bill Braun, Tom Patton, Tom Innes, Alan Langmuir, Amber Keeny.
Not Shown: Austin Ford, Joe Harralson, Eric Lander, Todd & Russel Moore, Chris Carpenter, Alan Hiatt, Richard Lovelace, Phil Kreiss (behind the camera.)

Thanks to all for a job well done!



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 2 pile drivers were disassembled at a marine construction yard and offshore in a slough in Pittsburg, CA.

Here we are continuing the story as written in the 2004 Booklet “*Pilebutts to Donkey Punchers:*” *Installment 8—The restoration Job.*

CHAPTER 4: RESTORATION & REASSEMBLY

Several crews worked from May through July to create an operating logging steam donkey engine out of the parts from the #2 pile driver. They cleaned, chipped paint and rust, fabricated parts for a new skid, painted, repaired the boiler, and finally assembled the first donkey engine, known as #2 donkey. The second donkey is scheduled to be restored in 2005.



On July 21, #2 steam donkey was loaded onto a lowboy truck trailer and hauled up to the fairgrounds for the 2004 Amador County Fair. Once the donkey was offloaded, the crew started packing in the refractory mud in the boiler, which would seat the boiler, a process that took several hours. And then it would need to cure 24 hours before steam-up.

Participants in the reassembly:

Grunts: Dave Bibby, Jim & Jake Headd, Ken McCoy, Mike Oswalt, Dave Sanders, Alan Langmuir, Bill Braun, Ryan Brownell, Tom Innes.

Trucking: Ed Aikin

Logistics & crew chief: Bill Braun



Who the hell is John Dolbeer? Or where did the steam donkey come from?

By Tom Innes

John Dolbeer was an interesting guy. He was born in New Hampshire on 1827. Like many of his generation, he headed to the gold fields in 1850 to make his fortune. Like many gold seekers, gold mining did not make a fortune for him.

Looking for other way of making a fortune, he went to the Humboldt Bay area, near Eureka. He purchased White's Bay Mill in Eureka. After the mill burnt down a couple of times, he partnered with William Carson and built what was to become a large redwood lumber company, the Dolbeer and Carson Lumber Company. As an aside, Carson built the Carson Mansion in 1863. This is an absolutely beautiful home in Eureka, worth viewing on a trip up the coast. The Dolbeer and Carson Company remained in business until the 1970s.

Dolbeer was a natural problem solver with many of his inventions supporting the lumber industry. One standout invention was the Dolbeer Logging Engine in 1881 and patented in 1882. We know it today as a steam donkey. The donkey was originally used for logging. It is mounted on skids and can drag itself through the forest to where it was needed. Actually, we could do the same, dragging it from Bill's to the fairground. The problem is that this is a really slow process and I am certain the CHP would catch us. The use of donkeys made much of the work easier, dragging logs to where they were needed. This was called yarding. Using high lines logs could be easily moved and reduced the necessary use of animals. Steam donkeys were widely used in California and the Pacific Northwest. They lasted until the invention of internal combustion engines and the diesel tractor crawler.

We have done yarding during the steam classes we periodically teach. You see what happens when you don't sign up for the class. You missed out. It really is fun. We would like to have a large enough area to set up and display yarding. Visitors can see how lumbering was done. Few people are around that have seen them used this way.

There were many use of the donkey. Pile drivers used the steam donkey, in fact ours came from San Francisco where they powered two pile drivers. Cranes used them as prime power sources such as loading railroad cars and the like. Donkeys were used on shipboard. But Dolbeer's patent was the addition of the winch.

Our donkeys were manufactured at the close of WW 2 in 1945. They were never used in the logging industry. The Port of San Francisco sold the two pile drivers to ASMA in April 15, 2004. The first one to operate at the Amador Fair was in July 2004. This was an oil powered vertical fire tube boiler. The second boiler was converted to a wood fired boiler and is used to power the Corliss.

John Dobleer lived to the age of 76. He died in 1902. His wife and daughter both committed suicide. His son died after being thrown from a wagon. There is a scholarship in his name awarded at the University of California, Berkeley.



ASMA helps Clean Up After a Fire at the Kennedy Mine

By Phil Kreiss

On August 14, 2017 a fire broke out in the Kennedy Mine Change house. Even though the fire was extinguished quickly, the smoke and burning plastic foam from the mine exhibit covered everything in the museum with black soot and contaminated it all with a terrible smell. What remained of the mine tunnel display had to be torn out. Also, the theater, gift shop, and all items on display had to be removed and cleaned, and the walls and ceiling had to be pressure washed. Later a small portion of the roof had to be replaced. The cleanup started immediately, with Linda Gonzalez of the Kennedy, and Bill Braun, also a volunteer at the Kennedy, spearheading the project.

A large number of outside volunteers worked on the cleanup along with many Kennedy Mine volunteers: These included volunteers from Cal-Fire, the CHP, Knight's Foundry Alliance, City of Jackson, several others, and of course the ASMA. On August 17, 2017 volunteers from the ASMA restoration team spent a day hauling out soot damaged items and displays. Later that week other ASMA members helped remove more things—it was a real mess—black smelly soot everywhere—Phil Kreiss of ASMA donated a dozen Tyvex plastic coveralls so volunteers would stay reasonably? Clean. In Time the change house was finally cleared and cleaned, and now the Kennedy is rebuilding its mine tunnel display, gift shop and museum.



Photos:

Upper Right— The burned out Mine Tunnel.

Left— Joe Harralson and Eric Lander removing damaged structure.

Right— The mine tunnel display is completely cleared out by ASMA volunteers.



ASMA Now Has A Facebook Page

Chris Allen, an ASMA volunteer and “steam affectionato” has put together a Facebook page for the Association and launched it Last January.

Chris says: “Involving the Association in "social media" should hopefully broaden our volunteer base, as well as get the word out on our activities on a large scale. Anyone can post items of interest on the page, as long as they pertain to our activities, or is something important going on in the county that relates to ASMA. I will moderate for the time being, so if you post something I will have to approve it. This will cut down on "spam" posts on the page.”

Please send Chris updates on events, progress photos, or anything that is pertinent to put on the page. E-mail him at: wsflco@gmail.com

To visit the page, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/amadorsawmill>



ASMA Special Cut and Annual Potluck Dinner.

By Phil Kreiss

On Friday, Nov. 3 and Sunday Nov. 5 ASMA conducted a special cut at the sawmill. On Saturday Nov.4, between the two workdays, ASMA held its Board meeting followed by the annual volunteer pot luck dinner at the fairgrounds. Of course, there was a set up day on Thursday and a cleanup day on Monday.



Earlier in the week Bill Braun picked up 10 pine logs at Jeff Pardan’s property in West Point—these logs, cut from beetle killed pines, were then cut into one by twelve boards to be used to build a barn by Mr. Parnell. There were also several other logs “on the deck” that were cut into lumber. Many volunteers worked to saw the logs, pull boards off the “green chain” and stack them. The Corliss engine ran well and there were no problems with the boiler or the saw. Special cut days like these bring in substantial income to ASMA, which can be used to improve the sawmill and maintain equipment: After all, that’s what sawmills are all about—to cut and sell lumber!

The ASMA sawmill has the extra added attractions of showing the public how it was done in the “old days” and is a source of old fashion “rough cut” lumber to be used in historical displays.

On Saturday the ASMA volunteers took a break from work and held their annual pot luck dinner at a fairgrounds building near the mill. Of course, the boiler crew (Frank and JohnTower) had to sneak over to the mill and keep the fire going, keeping the boiler warm for the following day’s cut. Before the dinner, ASMA officers and directors held their bi-

monthly board meeting.



The potluck got underway about 5 p.m., with the main course cooked by our famous culinary artists Ken McCoy and Steve Bishop. All kinds of side dishes, salads and desserts were brought in by volunteers.



At the end of the dinner, Bill Braun presented Brian Gibson with the ASMA “Volunteer of the Year” award in recognition of all the work Brian has done at the sawmill. A great time was had by everyone, but we all had to pack up and leave fairly early, because the next day would be another long workday at the sawmill.



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Upcoming Events:

DATE	TIME	EVENT
3 rd Sat every month (except July & Dec.)	Starts 8 A.M.	Workdays at Sawmill—Contact Bill Braun at: bbraun@hughes.net or 209-245-5097
March 3, 2018 First Sat., every other month	To be announced	Next ASMA Board of Directors meeting—volunteers and interested parties welcome. Contact Bill Braun for details at bbraun@hughes.net or 209-245-5097
To be Announced	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Steam Safety Workshop, Steam Donkey Demonstrations at Amador Co. Fairgrounds
Sat. April 28	8 A.M. to 6 P.M.	Sawmill in operation at the Antique Truck Show—Fairgrounds—Setup day on Fri. April 27
July 26-29 2018	11 A.M. and 3 P.M.	Amador County Fair—Sawmill in operation—2 shows daily, plus night shows on Fri. & Sat. at 8 P.M.
First Sat. in Nov.-- November 3, 2018	To be announced	Volunteer Potluck Dinner—Amador Co. Fairgrounds

Photos Courtesy of: Page 2-Ron Edgar. Page 4, 5,6-Phil Kreiss. Page 7- Tom Innes, Al Langmuir. Page 9-Upper Right: Barbara Kreiss, Lower: Ron Edgar. Page 10-Phil Kreiss, Barbara Kreiss. Page 10-Phil Kreiss, Barbara Kreiss.

Contributing Editors: Page 1-Bill Braun. Page 2,3-Phil Kreiss. Page 7-Tom Innes, Al Langmuir. Page 8-Tom Innes. Page 9-Phil Kreiss. Page 10-Phil Kreiss.

Production: Phil & Barbara Kreiss